

Danish U.N. observer flees Iraq

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — A Danish U.N. observer detained in Iraq over a fatal traffic accident has fled the country after spending 11 weeks under house arrest, a television station said Monday. If he had been caught, Torben Lund, 38, could have been hanged. Lund, a soldier, told TV2 that he paid \$2,000 of his own money to sneak out of Iraq and make his way to neighbouring Turkey, then on to Denmark where he arrived Saturday. Lund hit an Iraqi cyclist while driving on Sept. 22. The man died two days later. Lund's interpreter testified in his defence, saying Lund was not at fault in the accident. Lund was placed under house arrest at the headquarters of U.N. observers in Baghdad as Iraqi officials carried out a probe of the incident. Lund said that after 11 weeks under house arrest he got tired of waiting and decided to flee the country despite the risk of being hanged if caught.

Jordan Times

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Iran's conflicting voices on West emerge at Tehran Islamic summit

TEHRAN, (AP) — The contrasting faces of Iran's religious government were on display Tuesday at the opening of the Islamic summit in Tehran with a top leader blasting the West and another adopting a friendlier tone.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's hardline spiritual leader who is the country's top authority, opened the summit of more than 50 Muslim leaders from around the world, branding the United States and Israel as Islam's arch foes.

In an inaugural speech to the summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, Ayatollah Khamenei said the West had little to offer Muslims except a bankrupt lifestyle based on loose morals.

"The Western materialistic civilisation is directing everyone toward materialism, and money, gluttony, and carnal desires are made the greatest aspirations," said Ayatollah Khamenei.

He also assured the Islamic World it had nothing to fear from Iran, which once had vowed to export its religious revolution that ousted a pro-U.S. Shah in 1979 and installed the rule of the clergy.

Referring to the U.S., Ayatollah Khamenei said: "For 13 years now, the political designers of arrogance are breathing their poisonous breath to make our neighbours in the Persian Gulf fearful of Islamic Iran, which holds the banner of unity and brotherhood." Minutes later Iran's moderate President Mohammad Khatami told the summit that there was no conflict between Islam and the West.

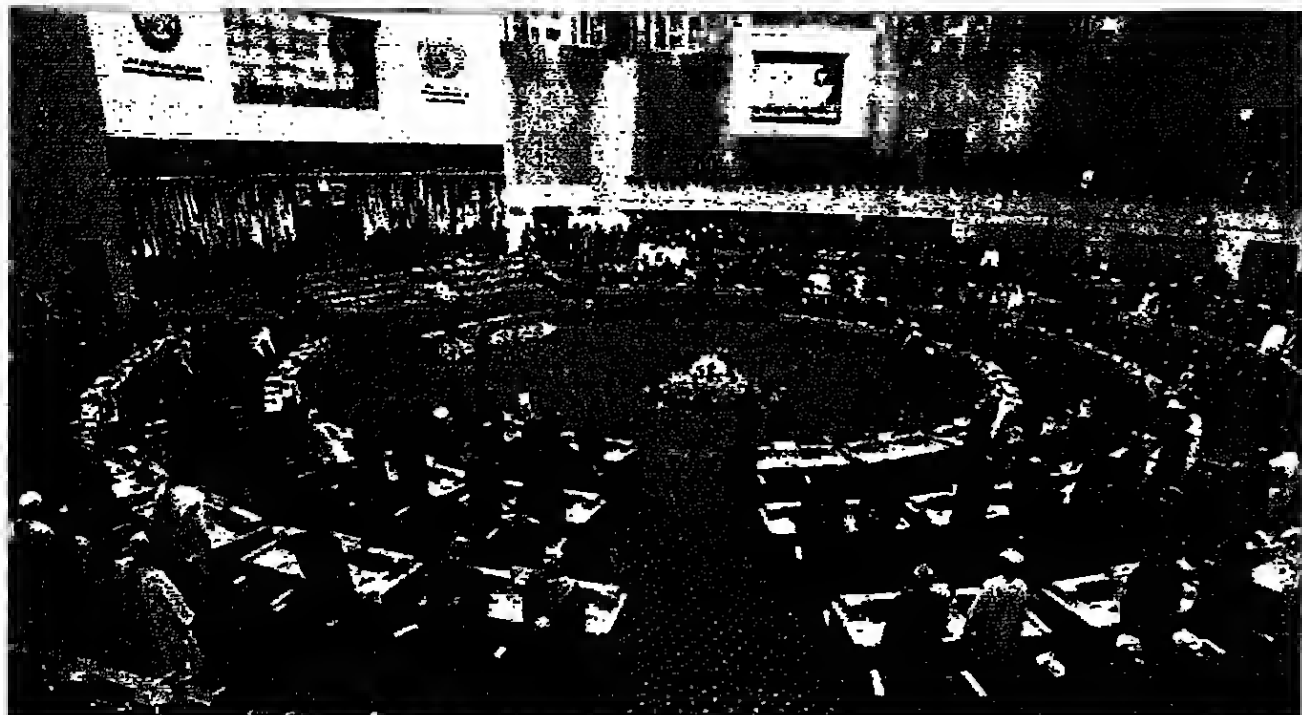
"Our era is an era of preponderance of the Western culture and civilisation, whose understanding is imperative," he said.

While Ayatollah Khamenei's speech focused on Islam's historical greatness, President Khatami looked to the future.

"We can transform our destiny through awareness, resolve and solidarity," Mr. Khatami said.

Speaking at length about human rights and the need for freedom of speech, he said an Islamic government "is the servant of the people and not their master, and in any eventuality, is accountable to the people whom God has entitled to determine their own destiny."

Mr. Khatami said Tuesday that police in coordination with the internal secret service had already been instructed to look



Heads of State and delegates stand as they listen to the Iranian national anthem during the opening session of the 8th Islamic Conference in Tehran Tuesday. Delegates from more than 50 Muslim nations are gathering in Tehran for a three day summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. The screens show a portrait of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Iranian Revolution (AP photo)

Ayatollah Khamenei and President Khatami, who represent opposing factions inside Iran's Islamic government, are locked in a political tug-of-war whose outcome will determine Iran's future course.

Mr. Khatami, who lived in Germany for several years, spoke of "dialogue among civilisations and cultures."

President Khatami got nearly 70 per cent of the vote in the May elections against a hardline candidate backed by Ayatollah Khamenei.

Iran hopes that the OIC summit, the largest gathering of international leaders in Iran since its 1979 revolution, will make new friends out of old foes like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which bankrolled Iraq in its 1980-88 war against Iran.

Iran and Saudi Arabia are the two most influential countries in the Muslim World. Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah is attending the summit, and an expected meeting between him and President Khatami is likely to mark a turning point in relations, ending nearly two decades of hostility.

Ayatollah Khamenei's strong speech, criticising the U.S. military presence in the Gulf, might, however, make mending faces with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait more difficult. Both countries host U.S. forces.

Saudi Arabia has been extremely nervous about criticism of its U.S. bases

since a June 1996 bombing at a U.S. military barracks in the eastern city of Dhahran killed 19 American airmen. The attack underscored the depth of internal opposition to the U.S. military presence.

In a statement released before Ayatollah Khamenei's speech, Prince Abdullah said that difference was "one of God's traditions," and warned that no Muslim nation should tell another "how to think or behave."

Ayatollah Khamenei also blasted the Middle

East peace process. But out of diplomatic tact he did not name Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Oman and Qatar, which have diplomatic or commercial ties with Israel.

"Our opposition to the so-called Middle East peace process is because it is unjust, arrogant, contemptuous, and finally illogical," said Ayatollah Khamenei, speaking at a brand new conference centre built for the conference. "Perhaps the existence of an enemy such as

Israel in the heart of the Islamic land could have brought us closer... [but] right now we fear each other more than we fear the enemy," said Ayatollah Khamenei to leaders of countries bound by their common Muslim faith but divided by their politics.

With U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan also present as an observer, Ayatollah Khamenei called on the world body to give it a permanent seat and veto power in the five-member U.N. Security Council.

Crown Prince meets deputy director of ICRC, Bangladesh prime minister

TEHRAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan who is leading Jordan's delegation to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Tehran Tuesday met the deputy director of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mr. Eric Rotzburger and discussed with him the refugees' issues.

At the meeting, which was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and the President of the Senate Zeid Rifai, Prince Hassan called for efforts to be made towards serving the refugees and for the world community to give due attention to the refugees' humanitarian needs.

He said that practical steps ought to be taken at the international level to accord the refugees their humanitarian rights.

Mr. Rotzburger lauded Jordan's efforts in the humanitarian field and the country's handling of refugee problems.

He expressed the ICRC's readiness to take part in any effort designed to discuss ways to improve the status of refugees and praised the Crown Prince's initiative and call on the world community to initiate a new international humanitarian order that can give more attention to humanitarian matters.

Prince Hassan also met Tuesday with Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, prime minister of Bangladesh, and reviewed topics on the summit's agenda.

The two sides discussed means of further promoting bilateral relations and reviewed issues of common concern.

The prime minister extend-

ed an invitation to Prince Hassan to visit her country who in turn expressed hope that the two countries will boost their economic exchanges.

Prince Hassan stressed the need for economic cooperation among Islamic states. He also welcomed a proposal by the Bangladesh leader for opening an embassy for her country in Jordan.

The prime minister expressed her country's appreciation of Jordan's efforts towards promoting inter-regional and inter-Islamic cooperation.

She said in a statement made to Jordan Television that her country's relations with Jordan continue to progress adding that further developments will be witnessed very soon especially at the diplomatic and economic levels.

Despite U.S. efforts, big gap remains between PNA, Israel

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Chief Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas Tuesday said that despite U.S. efforts to overcome the deadlock on the Palestinian-Israeli track, a "big gap" still exists between the two negotiating parties.

Mr. Abbas, who arrived here from Qatar, denied that the American administration had exercised pressures during a meeting between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to convince the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to accept an Israeli redeployment offer from rural areas in the West Bank.

"No pressure was exerted by the Americans," said Mr. Abbas, who was speaking to reporters following a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani.

He was referring to the meeting between Mr. Arafat and Ms. Albright that took place in Geneva earlier this week but achieved no solid results because Israel was unwilling to disclose specific figures concerning the size of the withdrawal.

The two sides agreed to hold another meeting by the middle of this month.

"The American side is exerting efforts to narrow the gap between the two sides because the gap is wide and I

believe their efforts are reasonable," Mr. Abbas said.

"Our demands are focused on a group of issues, mainly, further Israeli redeployment, putting an end to unilateral actions and implementing interim agreement articles," he added.

The interim agreement, signed in 1993, calls for Israeli withdrawal from most of the West Bank territories, the establishment of an airport and sea port in Gaza and launching of a safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza.

Earlier this month, the Israeli cabinet approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal for a conditional and partial pullout from the West Bank, but Mr. Abbas said that the PNA has not yet received an official plan of action from the Israeli side. "Until now, Israel did not extend any proposal to redeploy its forces from the West Bank. We demanded Israel to reconsider the first and second troop redeployment stages and also to form a committee to discuss the third stage of Israel's pullout from the West Bank," he added.

The Palestinian official praised His Majesty King Hussein's statement on Jerusalem, part of a letter to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali last Thursday, which called for establishing a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem.

"This is no strange thing coming from the King to sup-

port the Palestinian cause and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital," Mr. Abbas said.

He called upon Israel to withdraw from "every centimetre from the land it occupied in 1967 including Jerusalem."

"That is what we demand be returned to us just as Jordan's land returned to Jordan and Egypt's land was returned to Egypt," said Mr. Abbas, who was referring to the Israeli pullout from Egyptian and Jordanian territories, occupied in 1967, following peace agreements with the two countries.

Mr. Abbas said that he discussed with Dr. Anani bilateral relations and the difficulties the trade between Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule areas is facing.

Dr. Anani said that a Palestinian trade delegation has arrived here on Tuesday to pave the way for the joint economic committee that is scheduled to meet in the West Bank on Dec. 17.

Palestinian and Jordanian officials repeatedly accused Israel of "blocking" the flow of goods between the two sides under "security reasons."

Jordanian businessmen charged Israel of attempting to hamper trade between the two banks of River Jordan in order "to dominate the Palestinian market," where Israel markets \$2 billion worth of goods every year.

Jordan's new F-16 jet fighters to be delivered before new year

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The first batch of U.S.-made F-16 jet fighters will arrive in Jordan this month as part of the American military assistance to the Kingdom, a senior army official said Tuesday.

The official, who asked not to be identified, emphasised that six planes will arrive in the second half of this month while another ten will reach the Kingdom by the end of next January.

"The planes are part of the agreement His Majesty King Hussein concluded during

his visit to the United States," the official told the Jordan Times.

He said that Jordanian pilots trained abroad to operate these planes will arrive to the Kingdom "before the first F-16 aircraft batch touches Jordanian soil."

The official added that the pilots who will operate the second F-16 batch "will be trained in the Kingdom by Jordanian pilots."

Asked if Jordan will receive additional U.S. planes, the official declined to comment but emphasised that "Jordan always seeks to renovate its air force."

Last December, Jordan received \$100 million worth of military equipment, which included helicopters, tanks and air-sea rescue vessels, as part of a \$300 million U.S. military aid package pledged by the U.S. administration.

Earlier this year, President Bill Clinton named Jordan a "non-NATO ally" and by that announcement the Kingdom became eligible for more U.S. military assistance.

On June 12, Jordanian and U.S. troops held joint military exercises, code named "Infinite Moonlight 97," as part of the two sides' military cooperation.

Netanyahu sends police to stop Palestinian census in Jerusalem

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani Tuesday to make every effort to stop the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) from taking a census in east Jerusalem.

"In the Oslo [peace] agreements it says that the PNA can not act in Arab east Jerusalem," Mr. Netanyahu told Israel Radio. "We will take all necessary measures to stop the Palestinian Authority's attempts to meddle in Israel's capital and to stop this violation of the agreements," he added.

Mr. Kahalani said Tuesday that police in coordination with the internal secret service had already been instructed to look

out for and arrest any Palestinian census-takers in Arab east Jerusalem due to begin work on Wednesday.

Palestinian legislative council member in Jerusalem Ziyad Abu Ziyad insisted the Palestinians had every right to take the census in east Jerusalem.

"East Jerusalem in part of occupied territory according to international law," Mr. Ziyad told AFP. "The Palestinians have every right according to the agreements to hold elections here so why not the census?"

But he stopped short of saying the PNA would send census-takers to the disputed city.

Mr. Kahalani said Monday that he had sent a letter to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat informing him that a census

taken "in a territory under Israeli sovereignty violates the autonomy accords."

The Palestinians completed the final preparations Tuesday for the census to be taken in the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Arab east Jerusalem.

Some 160,000 Palestinians have lived under Israeli occupation in Arab east Jerusalem since Israel occupied the city in 1967.

To carry out the survey, some 3,300 census-takers will operate out of 20 centres in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The census will last until Dec. 24 and the first results are due to be released on Jan. 4. The operation is due to cost \$6 million, provided by Britain, Switzerland and the United Nations.

Iraq executes 4 Jordanians 'for smuggling auto parts'

AMMAN (Petra) — The Iraqi authorities on Monday executed four Jordanian students on charges of smuggling auto-spare parts, a well-placed Jordanian source said on Tuesday.

The source said despite the efforts made by senior Jordanian officials and the contacts with the Iraqi government and the Iraqi ambassador in Amman to obtain information on their charges, the Iraqi authorities went ahead with its unfair decision to execute the four Jordanian citizens whose charges, if established true, should not be punishable by more than a fine or imprisonment term.

"The Jordanian government condemns this unfair

measure which is strange particularly between the two neighbouring sister countries," said the source.

"It is our sacred duty to safeguard the lives of our citizens and to protect them in accordance with the values of justice, human rights and dignity," added the source.

The source said: "The government of Iraq knows well the kind of care that we give the Iraqi nationals in Jordan, yet it does not give weight to the feelings of our people and to the deep wound it has created by this inhumane act against our citizens irrespective of whatever justifications and allegations given."

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Palestinians ask OIC summit to counter Vatican-Israel agreement

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Palestinian legislature appealed to the Islamic summit meeting in Tehran this week to help oppose a recent agreement strengthening ties between Israel and the Vatican, officials said Tuesday.

At a session in Ramallah on Monday, the legislature adopted a resolution calling the Vatican-Israeli accord "an aggressive step against the Palestinian people which lends credibility to Israel's occupation of Jerusalem."

The agreement, signed on Nov. 10, granted legal status to Roman Catholic Church institutions in "areas where Israeli legislation is in effect" — a formula that includes Arab east Jerusalem.

The accord was an outcome of a "fundamental agreement" signed in 1993 which set the stage for the establishment of relations between Israel and the Vatican the following year.

Israel occupied the Arab eastern sector of Jerusalem in 1967 and illegally annexed it as part of its "eternal capital."

The world community, including the Vatican, has never recognised the annexation and under interim peace accords with the Palestinians Israel is required to negotiate the future status of the Holy City.

The 88-member Palestinian

legislature sent an "urgent message" to the summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference which opened Tuesday in Tehran, asking the Muslim leaders to discuss ways of countering the Vatican-Israel agreement, deputies said.

The deputies also asked the Palestinian executive branch headed by President Yasser Arafat to "use its contacts with the Vatican to prevent ratification of the agreement."

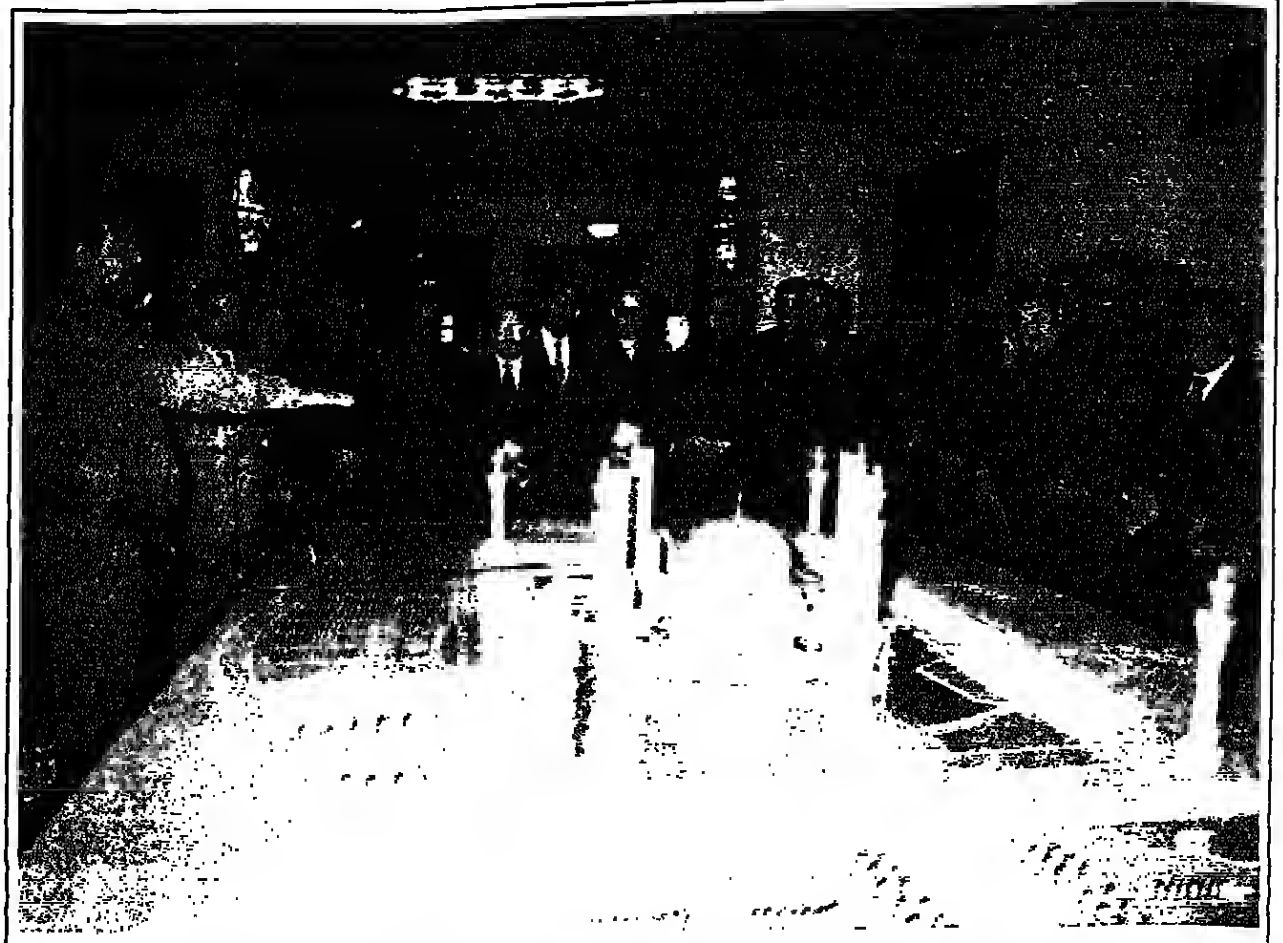
It also called on Mr. Arafat to send a delegation to "inform the Pope of the dangerous consequences of this agreement."

Vatican officials have already issued statements

insisting that the accord with Israel was a technical matter which signalled no change in the Holy See's policy of non-recognition of Israeli sovereignty over Arab east Jerusalem, where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Christianity's holiest site, is located.

Palestinian religious Affairs Minister Hassan Tahhuob earlier called the Vatican-Israel agreement "a stab in the back" for the Palestinians.

"This is a very dangerous matter which gives Israel a say over holy sites in Jerusalem, despite the fact that the status of east Jerusalem is still to be determined in peace negotiations," he said.



WORLD'S LARGEST MOSQUE: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (left) accompanied by members of his cabinet, on Monday night, examines a model of the mosque which is to be built in Baghdad on the site of a former airport that was heavily bombed during the 1990-91 Gulf war. The mosque, to be named 'Saddam Grand Mosque,' will be the largest in the world with a capacity for 30,000 worshippers IAP photo

'Israeli farm experts visit Iran'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Iran hosted 16 Israeli agricultural experts recently as part of an effort to rekindle economic ties with the Jewish state, Israel Radio reported Tuesday.

The visit by non-government experts was organised with the help of an Israeli group that facilitates ties with Arab states and German officials who passed on an invitation from an unofficial Iranian farm group, the radio said.

The radio, which quoted members of the Israeli group, did not give the dates of the visit.

The Israeli delegation met Iran's deputy agriculture minister and provided advice on fertilisation, irrigation and the establishment of farms to improve wheat and cotton production.

Following the visit, Iranian economic officials in Germany informed Israeli officials that they wanted to pursue economic cooperation, the radio said.

Most of the recent Israeli-Iranian contacts have been coordinated through Germany, the organisation told the radio.

The 16 Israelis had to leave their Israeli passports in an embassy in Germany on their way to Iran, the radio said. The Islamist regime which seized power in Iran immediately broke off relations with Israel and has refused to recognise the Israeli's right to exist.

Assad warns against Israeli efforts to divide Muslim ranks

TEHRAN (AFP) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad said here Tuesday that Israel was the biggest threat facing the Islamic World and warned against Israeli attempts to divide Muslim ranks.

"The Zionist state... has worked along and with others to sow seeds of dissension in Arab and Muslim lands," President Assad told leaders of the 55-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting in Tehran.

"Any dissension in our ranks is a source of strength for Israel and an opening for infiltration into Arab and Muslim countries," said the Syrian leader.

"Zionist aggression against Arab land is the most serious danger facing the entire Muslim community," he added, calling for the Tehran summit to foster greater unity in the Muslim

World.

Syria took part in the 1991 Madrid conference that launched the Arab-Israeli peace process, but its peace talks with the Jewish state have been frozen since February 1996.

Damascus demands the return of the Golan Heights, which was seized by Israel in 1967 and annexed in 1981, as a condition of any peace treaty with Israel.

Attempts to re-start Israeli-Syrian peace talks have made no progress since the right-wing government came to power in Israel in May last year, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refusing to bow to Mr. Assad's condition that peace talks re-start where they were broken off with the previous Israeli government.

"Muslims throughout the world know that the current

Israeli government has defied all the resolutions of the U.N. Security Council and the principles of the peace process," the Tishrin newspaper said.

The summit's success depends on "the adoption and implementation on the ground of firm resolutions against Israel, such as the closure of Israeli (interest) offices and (diplomatic) missions around the world," it added.

President Assad, in his speech to the summit as a representative of Middle East Muslim countries, also thanked host nation Iran for its "support of the Arab Nation and her struggle against Zionism."

Syria is Iran's top strategic ally in the Middle East, and is seen by Tehran as an important counterweight to Israeli and American influence in the region.

Israeli forces in south Lebanon are blind — Hizbollah

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Israeli forces in south Lebanon have failed to stop attacks by the Shiite militants of Hizbollah because of their poor intelligence about the movement, its leader said in comments published Tuesday.

"The resistance has succeeded not only in preventing the Israeli enemy from penetrating it, but also in turning it into a creature without eyes despite its enormous military capability," Hizbollah leader Hussein Nasrallah said.

"This capability is moving at random without accurate information. This was clear during the confrontations in July 1993 and April last year," Mr. Nasrallah told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Khaleej.

He was referring to an Israeli cross-border offensive against

Hizbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon in 1993 and another major operation, codenamed "Grapes of Wrath," launched in April 1996. The 1996 two-week offensive resulted in an agreement between the two sides to stop attacks on civilians.

Mr. Nasrallah said that during the 1993 hostilities, Israel claimed it was attacking Hizbollah positions although they were nothing of the kind. In other cases, Israeli jets raided Hizbollah targets which had been evacuated years earlier, he said.

"Grapes of Wrath was totally based on assumptions presented by the Israeli intelligence to the government and army, saying that Hizbollah possessed between 400 and 500 Katyusha rockets that could last only a few days," Mr. Nasrallah said.

Truce committee meets

NAQOURA (AFP) — The international truce panel met Tuesday to discuss two Lebanese complaints over the killing of three civilians and the expulsion of a family from the Israeli-held border zone in south Lebanon.

Beirut accused Israel of placing the landmines which killed on Friday the three Lebanese civilians and wounded a fourth outside Israel self-declared "security zone" near the village of Majdel Selm.

Lebanon said the incident was a violation of the April 1996 truce between Israel and Hizbollah in which both parties agreed to spare civilians when fighting in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon has filed a second complaint over the expulsion on Saturday from the border zone of a Lebanese man with U.S. citizenship, his wife and their two children aged four and six.

The committee convened, for the 24th time this year, at the headquarters of the U.N. Interim Forces in southern Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the town of Naqoura, near the Lebanese-Israeli borders, committee sources said. The committee has repeatedly dropped Lebanese complaints over expulsions, considering they were not covered by the terms of the 1996 accord which put an end to Israel's Grapes of Wrath onslaught into Lebanon.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah denounces violence by militants

TEHRAN (R) — Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah urged Muslim leaders on Tuesday to reject violence by militants claiming to act on behalf of Islam.

"Many questions arise in Muslim countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, about the heinous crimes being committed in the name of Islam and under the pretext of creating an Islamic form of government," he said in a speech released ahead of delivery at an Islamic summit in Tehran.

"Are these killers, who slit the throats of their victims, cut their limbs and

mutilate their dead bodies, to be trusted? Are they qualified to create an Islamic state?" he asked.

The prince, the most senior Saudi leader to visit Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution, did not name any Islamist groups, but was apparently alluding to the actions of Islamist guerrillas in Algeria, Egypt and elsewhere.

He invited his fellow Muslim leaders to issue a message of consolation to the Islamists' victims and a declaration "disowning and repudiating any action that is savage, barbaric, immoral and loathsome in the ideals of Islam."

The triennial summit of the 55-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) will consider several draft resolutions on combating terrorism and hijacking.

Delegates said that Iran, treated as a pariah state by the U.S. for its alleged support of terrorism, had insisted that the summit take up the issue.

Iran disavows any link with terrorism, but says it supports what it regards as national liberation movements such as Lebanon's Hizbollah and the Palestinian Hamas group.

Saudi officials have not

endorsed U.S. allegations that Iran had a hand in bombings of American military facilities in Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 1996.

Some other countries represented at the Tehran summit have in the past accused Iran of sponsoring violent attacks on their soil or interfering in their internal affairs, including Turkey, Egypt and Gulf Arab states.

Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia and Shiite Muslim Iran offer alternate models of Islamically-ruled states, but Crown Prince Abdullah said differences among Muslims were natural and none should seek

to impose its will on others.

"It is not in the nature of things for all Muslims to arrive at a single interpretation of how the Islamic state should look, or a common approach to our Islamic jurisprudence or a single concept of international politics."

"Nevertheless we are duty-bound not to use such legitimate differences of opinion as a pretext for hegemony in which each of us may try to dictate to his Muslim brothers how to think and how to work," he declared.

Saudi Arabia has long

resisted Iranian efforts to use the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca as a stage for political demonstrations against the U.S.

Clashes between Iranian pilgrims and Saudi security forces cost 400 lives in 1987 and led to a rupture in diplomatic relations, which were restored in March 1991.

Iran, for its part, has denounced the actions of Afghanistan's purist Islamic Taleban militia, saying its strictures have brought Islam into disrepute.

Crown Prince Abdullah said the world was witnessing an Islamic

revival, but said Islamist militancy showed that the Muslim community needed to put its house in order.

"The Muslim world is still suffering from a state of fragmentation and disruption and is going through the worst as a result of extensive militancy which has shed innocent Muslim blood in the name of Islam."

"The slogans raised by these militants are outrageous and have nothing in common with Islam and its spirit of justice and tolerance," the Saudi leader said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO
14:10.....Jonny Quest
14:30.....Art Box
15:00.....Spell Binder
15:30.....Monsters Today
16:00.....Border Town
16:30.....Neighbours
17:00.....French Programmes
19:00.....News in French
19:30.....News Headlines
19:35.....Doc. — High Tech Culture
20:00.....Step By Step
20:30.....Challenges
21:10.....Kung Fu
22:00.....News in English
22:30.....Land's End
23:15.....American Gothic

PRAYER TIMES

04:58.....Fajr
06:20.....Sunrise/Duha
11:28.....Dhuhr
14:14.....Asr
16:37.....Maghreb
17:59.....Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweith, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

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Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Rainfall is expected at intervals in all parts of the Kingdom, cold weather conditions will prevail with skies cloudy to partly cloudy and winds southwesterly active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds southerly moderate, and seas rough.
Amman.....07/13

Aqaba.....13/22
Deserts.....06/15
Jordan Valley.....12/19
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 12, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 66 per cent, Aqaba 38 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh.....5519220
Dr. Rabi Sukkar.....356457
Dr. Fadi Al Khatib.....865456
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih.....790104
Firas pharmacy.....661912
Ferdows pharmacy.....890280
Al Asema pharmacy.....637055
Al Salam pharmacy.....636730
Yacoub pharmacy.....644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najih pharmacy.....847632
IRBID:
Dr. Fawzi Abul Hajja.....252970
Al Quds pharmacy.....(---)
ZARQA:
Dr. Fahd Jabir.....984549
Khalifeh pharmacy.....985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre.....637111
Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade.....617101
Blood Bank.....775121
Highway Police.....843402
Traffic Police.....896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints.....605800
Price Complaints.....661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints.....897467
Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121
Overseas Calls.....810231
Central Amman Telephone Repairs.....623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television.....773111
Radio Jordan.....774111
Water Authority.....680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre

813813/32
Khalidi Maternity.....642816
Akileh Maternity.....642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, A. Amman.....636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 606131
Al-Muasher Hospital 66722791
The Islamic, Abdali 66612637
Al-Ahli, Abdali.....6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir.....775111/26
Army, Marka.....891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital.....674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery.....865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 08/983323
Zarqa National Hospital 09/940560
Ibn Sina Hospital 09/986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09/990909
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 02/275555
Greek Catholic Hospital 02/272275
Ibn Al Nufes Hospital 02/247101
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 03/314111
FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 0853200 where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 1527001 or 08532501.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:25.....Damascus (RJ)
08:05.....Larnaca (RJ)
08:35.....Jeddah (RJ)
08:50.....Damascus, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:45 Kuala Lumpur, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00.....London, Berlin (RJ)
10:10.....London, Vienna (RJ)
10:45.....Paris, Brussels (RJ)
10:50.....Cairo (RJ)
00:30.....Jeddah (RJ)
Other Flights
05:50.....Bucharest (RO)
09:30.....Cairo (MS)

09:30.....Al Ansh (PF)
10:15 Doha, Al Hududah (Y)
10:30.....Jeddah (SV)
10:50.....Kuala Lumpur (KU)
13:10.....Tunis (TU)
13:25 Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)
13:50.....Tel Aviv (LY)
14:30.....Doha (QR)
15:05.....Vienna (OS)
15:30.....Algiers (AH)
16:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
20:10.....Beirut (ME)
21:10.....Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:30.....Athens (OA)
23:15.....London (BA)
23:30.....London, Beirut (BA)
23:35.....Amsterdam (KL)
Royal Wings (RW)
07:45.....Aqaba (RW)
09:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20.....Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20.....Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

08:25.....Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
09:45.....Rome (RJ)
10:40.....Berlin, London (RJ)
11:30.....Isanbut (RJ)
13:00.....Jeddah (RJ)
17:00 Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
19:00.....Jeddah (RJ)
19:30.....Colombo (RJ)

20:05.....Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:10.....Cairo (RJ)
20:15.....Bombay (RJ)
20:15.....Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:30.....New Delhi (RJ)
21:00 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:15.....Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
01:00.....Sanaa (RJ)
Other Flights
00:35.....Amsterdam (KL)
01:55.....Bucharest (RO)
06:35.....Larnaca (CY)
08:00.....Beirut (ME)
08:25.....London (BA)
10:30.....Cairo (AF)
11:15 Al Hududah, Aden (Y)
12:00.....Kuwait (KU)
12:00.....Jeddah (SV)
14:10.....Tunis (TU)
14:20.....Sharmah (AH)
15:15.....Bahrain, Muscat (RJ)
15:10.....Tel Aviv (LY)
15:30.....Doha (QR)
15:50.....Vienna (OS)
19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
23:55.....Damascus, Paris (AF)
Royal Wings (RW)
06:45.....Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15.....Aqaba (RW)
09:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
16:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55.....Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50.....Aqaba (RW)



MINISTER PRESENTS GIFT TO KING, QUEEN: Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor Tuesday receive Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Bassam Saket, who presents Their Majesties a stamp carrying their photo. The stamp was issued to mark the King's 62nd birthday and the 20th anniversary of King Hussein and Queen Noor's wedding, according to the Islamic calendar (Photo by Yousef Allan)

Agriculture conference ends with call for more credit to small farmers

AMMAN (Petra) — Experts on agriculture and agricultural credit in the Arab World Tuesday ended a three-day meeting on providing credit to small farmers by calling on the concerned financial institutions to increase the amount of available credit.

Participants in the meeting, which was organized by the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development and the Islamic Development Bank, said making credit available to farmers enables them to secure equipment and develop their agricultural projects, especially in the rural regions.

Not only should small farmers be able to secure credit and loans, but the concerned creditors should reduce the burdens on these farmers by lowering interest rates, they added.

The participants also recommended that personnel employed in credit institutions be properly trained and urged the concerned authorities to re-examine legislation governing the financial institutions' operations in a bid to favour small farmers.

The delegates represented Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Mauritania, Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar,

Yemen, Morocco, Oman, and Bahrain.

Their discussions focused on agricultural production and the provision of credit to farmers in general and small farmers in particular.

Meanwhile, Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha Tuesday conferred with a German team entrusted with the task of helping the ministry implement agricultural policies and assess results.

The team, which represents the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, expressed its readiness to help the ministry overcome any obstacles in implementing the project.

Charitable organisations, intellectuals begin campaigns to help Iraqi children

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An Icelandic charity has launched a campaign to help fly Santa Claus to Baghdad on Christmas Day with gifts and medical aid for thousands of children suffering under punishing U.N. trade sanctions.

"Help Santa fly: your donation can bring Christmas to children of war," said the Reykjavik-based Peace 2000 International in a leaflet sent to the Jordan Times Tuesday by the Consulate of Iceland.

"Your cash donation can be made at any of the 40,000 Western Union agents worldwide, and will be received by Santa's workshops in Iceland within minutes," it said.

However, the leaflet did not say if the group obtained approval from U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to send the flight because of the tight control on civilian flights to Baghdad under the seven-year-old sanctions.

The group sent a plane-load of gifts to Sarajevo children in 1995.

The 2000 Peace Institute was established by Thor Magnusson with the sup-

port of more than 500 individuals and almost 100 organisations from around the world to assist children in trouble-stricken areas.

In two related developments, Egyptian intellectuals and a Belgian-based artists' group also launched separate appeals to help improve the lot of Iraqi infants under the sanctions, imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Egyptian intellectuals launched a campaign to collect one million signatures calling for an end to the plight of Iraqi children suffering under the sweeping embargo, Jordanian supporters said Tuesday.

The effort is part of the October 1997 Cairo Declaration, a document calling on the U.N. to help the Iraqi children and ban economic blockades, which they equated with weapons of mass destruction, they added.

Various regional non-governmental organisations have adopted the initiative.

The Arabic daily Al Arah Al Yawm, one of several papers backing the campaign, said it has received an encouraging response from hundreds of its readers after it ran the ad seeking signatures Wednesday. The

outcome of the signature collection will be announced on Dec. 22.

The Cairo Declaration also urged Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to take the lead in gathering the support of the peace-loving countries in the world in efforts to lift sanctions on Iraq and Libya by the end of 1998," according to the ad.

The Brussels-based Artists Without Frontiers Association also launched a similar appeal to help Iraqi children. In a press release received by the Jordan Times over the weekend, the society demanded the immediate lifting of the ban and the start of multilateral negotiations to find a "sustainable political solution."

Over 1.5 million people, including more than 700,000 children, have died in Iraq from a serious shortage of food and medical supplies caused by the sanctions, which have banned all Iraqi exports, including oil, once the country's main hard currency earner.

A limited oil-for-food deal reached between the U.N. and Iraq has not had much impact on improving the day-to-day life of Iraqis, analysts and diplomats have said.

UNRWA executive committee begins sit-in for better pay, working conditions

By Lima Nabil
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of 22 employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), representing the 22,000 employees in the agency's fields of operations in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza, Tuesday began an open sit-in at UNRWA headquarters in Wadi Seer to back demands for better working conditions and salary increases.

The group, which had sent an urgent message to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan containing their grievances and complaints, said they expected to meet UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen, who is due to arrive today from his headquarters in Gaza, because they said he can deal with their complaints.

The group, which serves as the UNRWA executive committee, started the sit-in following their annual meeting here, saying that the

agency has been dragging its feet in meeting the employees' demands, including salary increases, compensation for termination of employment and other benefits.

The executive committee members, who said they also sent memoranda to the governments of the Arab states hosting refugees, announced that they will hold a press conference today to air their complaints. They also said all 22,000

UNRWA employees Wednesday will stage a half-hour work stoppage to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the agency's policies.

Mr. Hansen's deputy at the agency's headquarters in Wadi Seer asked the committee members to leave the premises, but they insisted on staying overnight until they meet with the commissioner general, according to a committee statement Tuesday.

According to the execu-

tive committee, the employees were promised that their demands would be met five months ago. Nothing has happened and they have just learned that the agency will not meet their demands because of the deficit in its budget this year, they added.

Mr. Hansen, who recently submitted his report in New York on the agency's financial situation, received pledges for \$126 million to cover the deficit in the 1998 UNRWA budget, which is estimated at \$343 million.

Court hears witnesses in double murder trial

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Four witnesses in the trial of two men accused of murdering a man and his secretary near the Fourth Circle in June of this year gave their testimonies Monday at the Criminal Court.

Hani Fadi, 21, and his 19-year-old brother, Hisham, are both charged with the murder of Jubrael Iskandar, 63, and his secretary Fatimah Michael, 32, on June 11 in Mr. Iskandar's office.

The two suspects told the interrogators 48 hours after the murder that they plotted to kill them in retribution for the continuous humiliation Hisham suffered from Mr. Iskandar.

The court, presided over by Judge Mohammad Ajameh and including Judges Yassin Abdullah and Ahmad Khatib, postponed the trial to Dec. 15 to hear more prosecution witnesses in the case.

Meanwhile, the same court set Dec. 16 as the date to try two men accused of murdering two Saudi nationals in Ghamadan Park in July 1996.

The charges pressed against Usama Ahmad and Mohammad Saleh, both 25, by Criminal Prosecutor Zuhair Atiyah include premeditated murder, theft, possessing an unlicensed gun, and destroying official documents.

The charge sheet stated that the two suspects, who met at the Vocational Corrective and Rehabilitation Centre in 1992 after being convicted on theft charges in separate cases, decided to commit robberies together after their release in February 1996.

On July 12, the two suspects, carrying an unlicensed gun, headed to Ghamadan Park with the intent to rob and kill any person they saw, the sheet said.

The defendants saw two men sleeping next to a Mercedes 280 with Saudi plates. They approached the car, and when Mr. Saleh attempted to drive off with the car, the two victims woke up and tried to stop them, according to the charge sheet.

The sheet said Mr. Ahmad drew his gun and shot both men, robbed them of their wallets and fled the scene with the car. The victims were later identified as Sa'eed Itezi and his son Jamal, both Saudi nationals.

The suspects changed the licence plate and used the car for two months until it was seized by police after the suspects were unable to provide the necessary documents to prove that they owned it.

The two suspects were arrested by police on Sept. 13 after criminal lab experts determined that the car belonged to the two victims by examining the serial numbers on the vehicle's body.

The lab experts also determined that two bullets pulled from the vehicle matched the bullets retrieved from the victims' bodies.

Cabinet reviews draft budget speech

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday reviewed the draft budget speech outlining the Kingdom's financial, monetary, development, and social policies, which Minister of Finance Suleiman Hafez will deliver to Parliament today.

During the session, chaired by acting Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour, the Cabinet endorsed an agreement to reschedule

Jordan's \$66.4 million debt to Japan, and an agreement of bilateral cooperation between the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) and the French embassy in Amman.

Under the agreement, the French government will grant the JVA JD35,700 to upgrade the efficiency of the irrigation system in Jordan Valley, in addition to covering the costs of French engineers who will be

working on the project. The Cabinet authorised the JVA to sign the agreement on behalf of the government.

The Cabinet acceded to a request by the Iraqi minister of health to send a ten-member medical delegation, including specialists in kidney, chest, and general surgery, to Iraq to help perform surgical operations in cooperation with Iraqi doctors.

The Cabinet also endorsed an agreement on mutual promotion and protection of investments concluded in Doha last month between Jordan and Holland.

Three delegations were given permission to take part in meetings on civil aviation, education, and road construction to be held in Cairo, Oman, and Italy, respectively.

Health ministry, Algerian fund sign amendment to medical agreement

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Health and Medical Care Tuesday signed an amendment to an agreement concluded last year with the Algerian National Health and Social Fund on expanding cooperation in medical-related fields.

Officials at the ministry said the amendment will allow Algerian citizens to receive treatment for the

eyes, kidneys, heart, cancer, and the nervous system when referred by Algerian hospitals to Jordanian hospitals.

Treatment will be conducted at Ministry of Health hospitals, Royal Medical Services hospitals, and the Jordan University Hospital, in addition to private hospitals including the Amman Surgical Hospital, Ibn Al Halitham Hospital,

and Al Amal Cancer Centre. Under the agreement, the ministry will accept 72 Algerian doctors and specialists, in addition to nurses and paramedics, to acquire training in Jordanian hospitals each year.

The director of the Algerian fund, Abdul Majid Ben Naser, who signed the amendment document for his country, expressed hope that the new accord will

contribute to further cementing bilateral relations and praised the high level of medical service in Jordan.

Ministry of Health Secretary General Mamoun Maabreh, who signed for Jordan, said the Kingdom, in association with the private sector, seeks to serve as a pioneering regional centre for medical treatment.

Defence of man charged with smuggling weapons contests court's jurisdiction

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The defence team in the trial of a 34-year-old man accused of plotting attacks against tourists and smuggling weapons to the West Bank Monday contested the court's jurisdiction in the case.

Ismat Shukri is being tried at the State Security Court on charges of manufacturing explosives and smuggling weapons from 1995 to 1997.

Two other suspects, Ali A. and Mohammad M., are being tried in absentia on the same charges.

In their 3-page argument, the 7-member defence team also contested the investigation procedures, charging that their client was subjected to torture by the security forces and was forced to confess.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, Mr. Shukri, who has known

the second defendant for seven years, manufactured explosives in 1995 with the intent of using them against tourists and hid them in his home.

In 1996, the two defendants met with the third, Mohammad M., and decided to buy guns and machine guns to export to the West Bank with rubber hoists via the Dead Sea.

Mr. Shukri was arrested by security forces on Sept. 20, 1997 after the

authorities received a tip that he possessed explosives and was smuggling weapons.

State Prosecutor Ahmad Harran asked the court for time to prepare a response for the defence's arguments.

The military tribunal, headed by Judge Yousef Fa'ouri and including Judges Ahmad Ayash and Fawaz Boqour, agreed and set Dec. 14 as the date to hear the prosecution's response.

Human rights group urges Parliament to reject draft laws on parties, unions

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A local human rights group Monday slammed the government's public freedoms record and urged Parliament to reject two draft laws it said would impose further limitations on political parties and professional associations.

"The situation of human rights and freedoms in our country has witnessed a noticeable regression since last year," said the Jordanian Society for Human Rights (JSHR) in a statement marking the anniversary of the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The JSHR, an independent year-old group headed by French-educated sociologist Suleiman Sweiss, also condemned the government for introducing press restrictions in May and for not applying principles of fairness and freedom in the Nov. 4 general elections.

The government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, which was formed last March, has long rejected such charges, saying its oppo-

nents have to learn the rules of democracy and accept majority decisions.

The JHRS urged the newly-elected Lower House of Parliament, dominated by tribal leaders and pro-establishment figures, to "seriously consider the possible dangers before proceeding to endorse the draft laws (on political parties and professional associations)."

They also told deputies to "consult with all members of civil society before any amendments are introduced."

His Majesty King Hussein, in an speech to inaugurate the new Parliament late last month, promised that the government will introduce changes to three key laws to modernise Jordan's political drive.

The laws cover political parties and future elections, both key demands by the Islamist-led opposition that boycotted the last poll, and a third law to regulate the work of the 12 professional associations, vehement critics of Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

But the opposition, out of Parliament following

its boycott decision in July in protest against the peace deal and government policies, has stepped up criticism of the planned legislation.

Though the government has remained tight-lipped on changes to the professional associations law, reports in the local media have said the new rules will make membership in the unions voluntary, separate public from private sector members, and appoint a manager to supervise the activities of each association.

Successful governments have been engaged in attempts to depoliticise the outspoken Islamist and leftist-dominated unions, criticising them for engaging in politics at the expense of improving their members' professional standards.

The draft law on political parties, which were legalised in 1992 after a 35-year ban, is expected to give the minister of interior a greater role in monitoring party funds and to increase the number of founding members to 200 from 50.

The new law is also expected to dissolve any

political party that fails to achieve parliamentary representation in two consecutive elections and might introduce a capital requirement for parties.

The JSHR described press amendments introduced seven months ago while Parliament was in recess as "one of the most dangerous steps taken by the government."

The temporary legislation increased the paid-up capital requirement for weeklies and dailies, resulting in the closure of 14 publications.

The JSHR claimed that "large segments of society were deprived of social, economic, and human rights" against the backdrop of widening poverty and unemployment among the 4.5 million population.

"We are ringing the alarm bell because of this serious and grave situation," said the group. "We would like to stress that the policy of ignoring economic hardships and the misery of the people and suppressing human rights while turning the back on democratic demands will have serious consequences," said the three-page statement.

WHAT'S GOING ON

PLAY
* "The Moment" (Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre, at 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (until Dec. 11).

JAZZ CONCERT
* Jazz concert by Ulf Lenz at the Forte Grand Hotel at 8:00 p.m.

FILM
* Children's film "James and the Giant Peach" at the British Council, Jabbal Amman at 5:00 p.m.

DIALOGUE/LECTURE
* Dialogue with plastic artist Ghada Dahdaleh on her art at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598) at 6:00 p.m.
* Lecture: "The Image and the Word Between the Poet and the Artist" by Salwa Nashashibi at

Dar al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
* Photo exhibition by Edgardo Rodriguez entitled "Arab Presence in Cuban Architecture" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman, until Dec. 20.
* Plastic (abstract) art by Iraqi artist Dhaia Khaza'i at Hamourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Dec. 18.

* Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 10.
* Paintings by Ammar Khammash at the French Cultural Centre, Jabbal Weibdeh, until Dec. 12.

* Exhibitions of prints by Algerian artist Koraishi and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Hassan Massoudi at Dar al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31.

Kilani appointed head of Court of Cassation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Judiciary Council decided in a session on Dec. 9 to appoint Judge Farouq Kilani as head of the Court of Cassation and chairperson of the Higher Judiciary Council.

The decision has been referred to the Royal Court to be endorsed by Royal Decree.

North demands that U.S. troops quit South Korea as talks open

GENEVA (AFP) — The two Koreas, the United States and China opened landmark talks Tuesday aimed at concluding a permanent peace treaty for the peninsula, with the North demanding that U.S. troops quit the South.

For the first time, however, Pyongyang appeared to accept a bilateral dialogue with Seoul, a South Korean government official said here.

In the past, North Korea has said peace talks should be with the United States, since South Korea was not a party to the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean conflict.

The North also called for a normalisation of ties with the United States, considering this essential if a new peace mechanism were to be implemented on the peninsula, the official said.

"The North Koreans said the reason they agreed to the four-party talks was because it could normalise relations between the United States and North Korea, but also to hold dialogue between South and North Korea," he added.

"As we had expected, North Korea demanded the withdrawal of U.S. troops stationed in South Korea," the official said, referring to the some 37,000 U.S. soldiers stationed south of the 38th

parallel. The historic four-party talks, set to last two days, were a first step toward replacing the armistice that technically ended the war in 1953 but left the two Koreas divided by the world's most heavily-armed frontier.

As Swiss foreign affairs official Jakob Kellenberger formally opened the meeting, reports from North Korea indicated the infant mortality rate had nearly doubled in the famine-stricken nation of 22 million.

U.S. and South Korean officials have suggested it was the urgent need for food aid that had brought Pyongyang to the conference table.

Officially, however, the accent was on a peace treaty.

"We hope that this process will result in the progressive introduction of confidence-building measures on the Korean Peninsula with the ultimate aim of ending the 'no war, no peace' situation which has prevailed since the signing of the armistice in 1953," Mr. Kellenberger told the session.

The last frontier of the cold war, the demilitarised zone between the capitalist South and the Communist North, has seen repeated skirmishes. It is that history — the fear the beleaguered North Koreans might lash

out against South Korea and the 37,000 U.S. troops there — that prompted Washington to push hard for the talks.

China, which went to North Korea's aid against the U.S.-led United Nations force in the Korean conflict, is expected to play mediator.

In a keynote speech, chief Chinese delegate Tang Jiaxuan said that better relations between north and south were not enough, and that Pyongyang and Washington should also strive for "ultimate normalisation of relations."

A South Korean delegate meanwhile said it was up to Pyongyang and Seoul to "play the main roles while the U.S. and China play supporting roles" at the talks.

The talks followed months of diplomatic wrangling after they were first proposed in April 1996 by South Korean President Kim Young-Sam and U.S. President Bill Clinton.

"How the talks will turn out, nobody knows. But we hope the talks will eventually lead to the signing of the peace treaty after all these years," a South Korean official said.

Li Gun, the North Korean ambassador to the United Nations, told reporters Monday that the talks were "very much a

historical event."

During the Geneva meetings, the four parties will try to agree on the structure of the talks, narrow down the agenda and finally set the date for the next meeting in what will likely be a tough, drawn-out process.

The opening of the talks coincided with reports of the first published statistics from Pyongyang on the effects of its massive food shortages.

Aid workers quoted North Korean health ministry figures as saying that the mortality rate for children under five years had reached 58 per 1,000 in 1996, up from 31 per 1,000 in 1994.

"I think that rate is probably higher now as those figures are almost a year old," said Karen Gottlieb, executive director of Americas Free Clinics who arrived in Beijing Tuesday from Pyongyang.

The figures also indicated a plummeting birth rate.

"The problem is of staggering proportions and although people are not dying of starvation, they don't get enough to eat and then they are getting sick and dying," Americas Vice-Chairman Guy Smith said.

Spain proposes shared Gibraltar rule with U.K.

MADRID (IR) — Spain proposed Tuesday sharing sovereignty with Britain over disputed Gibraltar in an apparent softening of its long-standing demand for sole rule.

Spain will present the new compromise idea at an annual meeting on Gibraltar with British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook in London Wednesday, a Spanish foreign ministry spokeswoman said.

"Spain is to offer Britain shared sovereignty over Gibraltar," the spokeswoman said.

Madrid has long insisted that British rule of the tiny colony on Spain's southernmost tip is illegal and has claimed sole sovereignty over the territory which it ceded to Britain in the 18th century.

A British embassy spokesman in Madrid said London would not rule out any proposal immediately.

"Anything related to sovereignty needs to be considered by the U.K. government and the people of Gibraltar, but no

offer will be rejected out of hand," the spokesman said.

But Gibraltarians have traditionally dismissed any attempts by Spain to lay claim to the territory.

"Gibraltar's position is that shared sovereignty is unacceptable," a Gibraltar government spokesman said. "We believe Gibraltar is British and always has been."

Spain's proposal is the second bid it has made in as many months to resolve the thorny issue of rule over Gibraltar, a long-standing bone of contention with Britain.

In October, Spain offered to ease its restrictions on air and sea access to Gibraltar in exchange for shared military use of the colony's airport, which Britain controls. The offer was rejected.

Britain almost blocked the approval of a new North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) structure last week because Spain had refused its demands to lift the restrictions.

But in what was seen as

a concession to Spain, Britain dropped its objections at the last moment and the new NATO structure was approved.

The restrictions, which complicate movement between Gibraltar and the Spanish mainland, remain in force. Planes cannot fly directly from Gibraltar to Spain and ships must make long detours around Spanish waters to reach Gibraltar's docks.

The Spanish foreign ministry denied a British newspaper report that Spain would offer Britain a lease on the territory.

"The deal has nothing to do with a 99-year lease as the times newspaper reported," the ministry spokeswoman said. "The report was wrong, but we can give no further details at this point."

Spain handed over Gibraltar to Britain under the 1713 treaty of Utrecht after an Anglo-Dutch force captured it in 1704 in the war of the Spanish succession.

Approval of Hashimoto cabinet falls to record low 35 per cent

TOKYO (AFP) — Public approval of Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's government has plunged to 35 per cent, the lowest since he took office in January 1996, a leading business daily reported Tuesday.

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun said the outcome reflected voters' dissatisfaction with Mr. Hashimoto's economic policies and reform plans amid a financial crisis following the failures of financial institutions.

The latest approval rate showed a decline of 7.8 percentage points from the previous poll in September.

The newspaper also found that the disapproval rate increased 9.0 percentage points to 44.6 per cent, also the highest since the beginning of Hashimoto's first cabinet.

The business daily conducted the nationwide poll on 3,000 voters two days after Hashimoto finalised his proposals on streamlining the Japanese government on December 3. Of the polled, 60.9 per cent responded.

Led by Hashimoto, the administrative reform council finalised a proposal to cut down the number of government ministries and agencies from 22 to 13 by 2001, in line with its original proposal.

The final report said the number of civil servants would also be cut by at least 10 per cent over 10 years from 2001.

But the survey said 58 per cent did not appraise Mr. Hashimoto's proposal.



Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic turns around as Serb Republic President Biljana Plavsic (rear centre) sits at the conference table at the start of the plenary conference of the Peace Implementation Council in Bonn. German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel called for reconciliation between the various ethnic groups in Bosnia at the meeting (Reuters photo)

German FM Kinkel calls for tougher enforcing of Bosnia peace

BONN (AFP) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel called here Tuesday for the main international representative in Bosnia to be given the power he needs to finally make the three ethnic factions there co-operate.

Opening a peace implementation conference on Bosnia, Mr. Kinkel said High Representative Carlos Westendorp "must be able to impose interim solutions until the Bosnian institutions have reached agreement."

"The permanent blockage of major decisions must be prevented," Mr. Kinkel said, adding that "this applies especially where overdue decisions have to be made, if necessary against the will of individual groups."

Monclito Kravjansk, the Serb representative in Bosnia's collective presidency, rejected the idea of the high representative having more powers and said the "pressure by the international community is unfair and counterproductive" since the Serbs were not blocking the peace process.

A total of 51 nations, as well as 21 international organisations, began a two-day meeting in Bonn Tuesday to move towards full implementation of the Dayton peace accords. The 43-month war in Bosnia has been over for two years but little progress has been made in getting the Muslim, Serb and Croat factions to build a country together.

The problem of refugees being unable to return to their homes is a key topic here at the ministerial meet-

ing of the Peace Implementation Council of the Dayton peace accords for Bosnia, which comes only six months before the end of the mandate for the NATO-led peacekeeping force.

Muslims, Serbs and Croats continue to live in Bosnia in sectors that have been ethnically cleansed of the other groups, with disagreement on such basic matters as a common passport, flag and even uniform licence plates.

Mr. Westendorp told the conference: "The peace process in Bosnia is seriously blocked."

He stressed that there was "no alternative" to enforcing the Dayton accords, which ended the war in December 1995, and set up a Bosnia state with two entities — a Muslim-Croat federation and a Serb republic.

Mr. Westendorp criticised those in Bosnia "who nostalgically for the pre-war situation, refuse to accept the new realities brought up by Dayton and desperately cling to the old structures they dominate," an apparent reference to the Serbs.

He said "far too many war crimes indictees still remain at large," and specifically named Serb hardline leader Radovan Karadzic, who is living in Pale in Bosnia despite being sought by the International War Crimes Tribunal that sits in The Hague.

Mr. Westendorp said he was "not seeking from this council a new or revised mandate, not yet" but was "seeking full support in the more vigorous exercise of my existing mandate in

order to clear the boulders strewn across our path."

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana said: "We cannot accept gridlock in the common institutions that are so crucial to consolidating the peace."

He said concrete commitments must include "restructuring of local police" and "the reform of the judicial and penal systems in Bosnia."

Mr. Kinkel said that he and French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine had in Sarajevo last week given Bosnian leaders an ultimatum to make decisions on the passport issue as well as a common currency and "a law on the functions of the council of ministers."

"The joint message from Hubert Vedrine and me was that the Bosnian leadership should not come to Bonn with empty hands," Mr. Kinkel said.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, who is Muslim, and Croat Kresimir Mr. Zubak were at the conference, as well as Mr. Kravjansk.

Mr. Kinkel also referred in his speech to Kosovo, an Albanian-majority enclave in Serbia, saying there should be "a special status for the region and a guarantee that human and minority rights will be respected. A political solution is long overdue. The violence must stop."

Dragomir Vucicevic immediately responded for Yugoslavia, which is made up of Serbia and Montenegro, by denouncing what he called "unacceptable interference in our internal affairs."

Australians half-hearted about convention on republic

SYDNEY (AFP) — Fewer than half of Australia's 12 million registered voters have returned ballot papers to elect delegates to an upcoming constitutional convention to discuss severing links with the British monarchy.

With the deadline of 6.00 p.m. Tuesday, around 43 per cent of the papers had been returned, representing just 5.1 million voters in an election for which, unlike other elections held here, voting is non-compulsory.

Republicans and monarchists alike expressed disappointment at the low response, with republicans blaming the government.

However, the pro-republican Labour opposition said the convention to be held in February was unnecessary, since polls have consistently shown a majority of Australians in favour of a republic.

Convention co-chair and Republican Ian Sinclair said he had hoped for the largest voter turnout possible.

Genetic therapy used to treat obesity

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A single injection of a genetically engineered virus managed obesity and diabetes in mice for several months, says a study published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Mice deprived of the gene producing leptin, the recently identified hormone involved in weight control, tended to overeat and get fat, the study found. The mice also showed symptoms similar to those in humans suffering diabetes caused by obesity.

Mice injected with leptin ate smaller quantities of food and weighed less, but they needed frequent infusions of the hormone to stay stable. Using genetic engineering, researchers adapted a virus to carry the gene for leptin, which was injected into the muscles of the leptin-deprived mice. The rodents consequently maintained normal weight, appetite and levels of insulin and glucose over six months.

Amnesty says world still breaking rights promises

JOHANNESBURG (IR) — Amnesty International said Tuesday many governments around the world were still abusing human rights almost 50 years after the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

"The declaration... was a promise by governments to work towards a world without cruelty and injustice, to work towards a world without hunger and ignorance," Pierre Sane, amnesty secretary-general told a news conference in Johannesburg.

"Yet almost 50 years later, the record of many governments is one of broken promises," Mr. Sane said, launching a campaign for leaders and citizens to pledge support for the declaration a day ahead of International Human Rights Day Wednesday.

Mr. Sane said the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, was one area of concern and urged Kinshasa to allow a U.N. investigation into the disappearance of Rwandan Hutu refugees to proceed unhindered.

The London-based organisation says 200,000 Hutus are still missing in the east of the country, where thousands are alleged to have been massacred by troops loyal to Congo President Laurent Kabila, "backed by Rwandan Tutsi forces."

Both armies deny the charges. Amnesty said Kinshasa had called it the "enemy of the people" for complaining about alleged human rights abuses in the country.

But despite continued human rights violations, Mr. Sane said the declaration, adopted in response to the atrocities committed during World War II, had formed the basis of human rights protection for the last half century.

"The UDHR has been used as a manifesto for those who fought colonialism, racism, gender discrimination and apartheid."

"No government will stand up and say they don't support human rights," he said, "in terms of ideology, the human rights movement has won the battle."

Amnesty wants to gather millions of signatures from individuals willing to pledge their support to the declaration. It will then present them to the United Nations on Dec. 10, 1998, the document's 50th anniversary.

Mr. Sane said Burmese opposition leader Aung San San Kyi and Mary Robinson, the U.N.'s high commissioner for human rights, had been among the first to sign the declaration.

"We want to show there is a groundswell of popular support for the rights in the declaration. To show that the public will not stand by for another 50 years of broken promises," he said.

Noel van Breda, amnesty chairman at South Africa, said the group had chosen to launch its campaign in South Africa because the country had become a beacon of hope for the continent and the whole world since the end of apartheid.

Amnesty is due to hold its 23rd biennial International Council meeting in Cape Town from Dec. 12 to 19 and expects 500 human rights activists from 80 countries to attend.

FBI official meets relatives of TWA Flight 800 victims

BALTIMORE, Maryland (AFP) — FBI Deputy Director James Kallstrom met Monday with relatives of those who died on TWA Flight 800 to explain in person why investigators have ruled out terrorism as a cause of the plane crash.

"I have taken this opportunity to see the families and I have explained to them why the criminal investigation was ended," Mr. Kallstrom said at National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) hearings here into the unexplained crash.

The Paris-bound Boeing 747 fell into the Atlantic Ocean shortly after take-off in New York on July 17, 1996. All 230 passengers and

crew members were killed after the plane's half-filled central fuel tank exploded.

The families "are very frustrated because we still don't know basically what happened and because we haven't been able to close this case, but they are basically satisfied with our investigation," Mr. Kallstrom said. Michel Cremades, president of the association of victim's families, said he was not satisfied.

"We have repeated one more time to the FBI our request to pursue the criminal investigation," Mr. Cremades said. "We have been told that the notion of criminal negligence doesn't exist in U.S. law and therefore there is no basis to pursue

it. "This concept exists, however, in French law and the French criminal investigation is still ongoing and Mr. Kallstrom offered to cooperate fully to this investigation."

Mr. Kallstrom said the Federal Bureau of Investigation is cooperating with French authorities within the limit of U.S. law.

Cremades' association is asking for charges of criminal negligence to be filed against Boeing, TWA and the Federal Aviation Administration. The NTSB, which investigates air crashes, is conducting the five-day hearing here in an effort to put to rest the lingering controversy over the crash.

U.N. team begins massacre probe in former Zaire

KINSHASA (AFP) — A U.N. team probing allegations of massacres in the former Zaire arrived in the northwestern town of Mbandaka was Monday to begin its long-delayed investigation, mission spokesman Jose Diaz said.

The investigators, including about 15 experts, flew in from Kinshasa in a plane chartered by the United Nations, and were scheduled to meet with local leaders Tuesday.

Mbandaka is the first stop of an investigation that has been blocked for months by the regime of President Laurent Kabila, who took control in the newly named Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in May. A preparatory team left for Mbandaka, some 600 kilometres from Kinshasa, ahead of the U.N. experts last Wednesday to assess safety conditions and necessary logistics for the first round of investigations.

The U.N. team, which has been waiting in Kinshasa for the past four weeks to be allowed to go to Mbandaka, is to investigate serious allegations by several human rights organisations.

The organisations, including Amnesty International, claim the massacres were carried out by Tutsi-led rebels who helped Mr. Kabila topple the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May.

Hundreds of thousands of refugees had fled to Zaire from Rwanda's genocidal civil war of 1994. While most returned home after Mr. Kabila's rebellion began in October 1996, many stayed behind and tens of thousands are feared slaughtered.

Kinshasa has systematically rejected the allegations, denouncing them as a campaign to tarnish the image of the DRC. The probe will also travel to eastern DRC where Mr. Kabila's rebellion was launched in October 1996.

The mission is finally under way just days after the World Bank hosted a development conference for the DRC in Brussels that pledged

resumed aid for the devastated country and recognised Kinshasa's recent goodwill towards the U.N. probe.

The development also comes ahead of a visit Friday by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. In meetings with Mr. Kabila, Ms. Albright will "look beyond the immediate present and try to find ways to support the successful transformation of that country, which frankly could go either way," a State Department official said last week.

By allowing the investigation to go forward, Kinshasa has put aside impediments, foot-dragging and broken promises that frustrated the international community and U.N. chief Kofi Annan for months. Two earlier planned U.N. missions were rejected in June and July. Kinshasa objected to mission leader Roberto Garretón of Chile, who wrote a report in March accusing Mr. Kabila's troops of committing massacres. The United Nations eventually relented, appointing a Togolese legal expert, Atsu-Koffi Amega, to replace Mr. Garretón. But the investigators' woes continued. In August and September they languished in Kinshasa, prevented from beginning their mission for one reason or another by the DRC authorities.

Mr. Annan recalled the team to New York for consultations in early October. On Oct. 25 the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, came to Kinshasa to seek a new accord with Mr. Kabila on the mission. The investigators returned to Kinshasa in November on the basis of these arrangements, but Mr. Annan had to twice issue public warnings to the Kinshasa government on the consequences of refusing to cooperate.

The probe's mandate runs until Feb. 28. Given the series of delays, Mr. Annan has told the DRC that the mission may extend until May if necessary.



Richard Branson (right), accompanied by family and friends, searches the sky for the balloon in which he had planned to attempt his round-the-world record-breaking journey, after it broke free of its moorings (Reuters photo)

Branson loses balloon, scuppers record-breaking bid

RABAT (AFP) — British billionaire Richard Branson lost his hot-air balloon in a freak accident Tuesday, scuppering his latest bid to fly around the world, when it broke free of its moorings and sailed away without him.

The high-tech craft was carried away by a sudden gust of wind as the final preparations were under way in Marrakech, Morocco, for his second attempt to fly around the world non-stop in a balloon.

Mr. Branson put a brave face on it, admitting the sight of it flying away had "brought a tear to my eye" but saying he hoped to recover the balloon and set off next week.

"We sent a plane and a helicopter to try to find it. I still hope we can find it and leave next week on our trip round the world," Mr. Branson told AFP by telephone from Marrakech.

"We were not lucky," he said. "The balloon broke free from its moorings at the most delicate moment of the final preparations, very technical ones, during the inflating of the balloon."

Mr. Branson added that even if he failed to recover the balloon this time, he would return to Marrakech next year for another attempt.

The dazed billionaire, accompanied by his daughter Holly, 16, and son Sam, 12,

said the venture was far from over.

"We are looking for it now with helicopters so all is not lost," he said. "When I first heard the news I thought it was all over, but I think we will live to fight another day, if not this year then definitely next year."

A small explosion was heard before the balloon's "envelope" split from the pilots' capsule and soared away without anyone on board.

The balloon wrenched free as technicians were inflating it with helium at the launch site near here.

Earlier, a spokesman for Mr. Branson said the team, due to have taken off from Morocco, was not giving up its attempt to circumnavigate the world, but that "it will take weeks to make a new balloon."

"We will see if it is possible or not to make a new one before February, the final date at which an attempt at a round-the-world flight can be made," he said.

Will Whitehorn, a spokesman for Branson's Virgin group, said that a "sudden gust" of thermal wind had come off the Atlas Mountains "and ripped the balloon from its moorings."

The tycoon was a few hours from a second bid to become the first person to fly around the world non-stop by balloon.

U.S. launches alliance, blasts slow progress at climate talks

KYOTO (AFP) — The United States launched Tuesday an alliance with friendly nations at U.N. climate talks and blasted slow progress in negotiations to combat global warming.

Chief U.S. negotiator Stuart Eizenstat said negotiations "still have far to go and we do not sense the urgency on the part of many countries that is necessary given the lateness of the hour."

"Because time is short and because of the difficulty of the negotiations we have had, we have tried to find ways to find common ground with other countries," he said.

Mr. Eizenstat said the United States was working on a "new approach" of trading emissions with other countries including Japan, Russia, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The alliance "would be open to any other like-minded countries that also believe in the need for differentiation to bridge the gaps that exist" between developed countries, he said.

"While many details remain to be worked out about this umbrella group, which could trade amongst

itself, our discussions have been constructive and have made progress," the U.S. delegation chief told a news conference.

The countries would press ahead with work on the grouping later in the day and would meet again with the European Union, he said.

The European Union aims to be treated as a single entity, or "bubble" in the conference, which seeks to impose legally-binding cuts on developed countries' output of greenhouse gases, blamed for warming the world.

Mr. Eizenstat blasted proposals by some countries, included in a draft Kyoto Protocol released hours earlier, that only three gases be dealt with here and that another three be tackled at next year's meeting in Buenos Aires.

Taking 1990 emission levels as a base, the United States had offered to stabilise by 2008-12, the European Union to cut by 15 per cent by 2010 and Japan to reduce by five per cent by 2008-12.

But the U.S. offer included six gases while Japan and the EU comprised only three.

"Had we adopted a three-gas approach it would have given the United States a reduction figure of six per cent, lower than the one we now have, but we did not want to play a numbers game," he said.

"These other three gases ... are the most rapidly growing and the most long-lasting — some will last some 20,000 years — and it is fundamentally and environmentally unsound not to cover them."

The draft protocol released Tuesday includes the emissions of three major gases blamed for trapping the earth's heat — carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane.

The official proposal calls for the three gases not included, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride, to be taken up at next year's conference.

Mr. Eizenstat said the U.S. decision to show flexibility, announced by U.S. Vice President Al Gore here the previous day, depended on a package including the six gases and "meaningful participation" by developing nations.

The draft protocol only includes a section that

allows developing countries to voluntarily declare a target for limiting greenhouse gas emissions with their own timetables.

Developed countries are called on to provide extra financing and transfer technology to help poorer nations meet their long-standing commitment to improve the quality of emissions as far as possible.

The proposal launches a so-called clean development fund under which developed countries can win credit on their own reduction targets by helping poorer countries to reduce emissions.

Mr. Eizenstat said the United States welcomed the clean fund proposal.

He said the U.S. proposals include real reductions below 1990 levels in the 2008-12 time frame.

"While I am not going to go into more detail here because of the sensitive timing, the figure reported earlier today (of a two per cent cut on six gases) understates our proposal," he said.

The U.S. official cut the news conference short without allowing questions, blaming the frenetic negotiations.

Cambodia's strongman blasts 'anarchic democracy'

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian strongman Hun Sen Tuesday called for law and order to be respected while attacking "anarchic democracy" as a menace to public security.

"Anarchic democracy brings nothing but danger to the Cambodian nation and people," Hun Sen said in a speech marking the handover of nearly 200 military vehicles provided by China under a credit scheme.

The powerful second prime minister called July's fierce fighting, in which he effec-

tively ousted co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh, "regretful," but said it had been "provoked by extremists."

"In the implementation of democracy in Cambodia, drawing on experiences from this past event in July, the royal government clearly determines that the just and beneficial democracy is a democracy in conformity with the state of law," Hun Sen said.

Hun Sen has said he was forced into the July action

because the prince, who is now in exile facing criminal charges at home, was breaking the law by importing weapons illegally and dealing with the outlawed Khmer Rouge.

Prince Ranariddh has denied the charges, but has said he will not stand trial in Cambodia where human rights workers and legal observers say the judicial system is politically biased.

In his speech Hun Sen praised China for its non-interference following Prince

Ranariddh's ousting, which brought fierce condemnation from the West.

"Related to the (July) event, though some international circles did not rightly understand the real situation in Cambodia, some friendly countries have taken the right and fair stance toward the Cambodian problem," he said.

China "firmly stands on the principles of peaceful co-existence, respecting independence and sovereignty and non-interference of (Cambodia's) internal affairs," he said.

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The message from Tehran

THERE IS no doubt that the current Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit is a turning point for the Muslim World in general, but specifically for Iran. If we are to judge by the speech made by President Mohammad Khatami at the opening session of the summit, Iran is turning away from its past radical positions and is advocating instead dialogue and accommodation. President Khatami used the occasion of assuming the leadership of the Muslim World to put forward his blueprint for a new Iran, a country at peace with itself and the world. He told his people and his fellow Muslim leaders that they need to understand the West and enter into dialogue with it. He told them they need to develop their civil societies because, he said, "to return and stay in the past is regression and backwardness."

Mr. Khatami's message went beyond criticising Muslim fundamentalists at home and abroad into calling on "intellectuals and thinkers to reexamine our heritage... and tradition on the one hand and the sophisticated understanding of the modern world on the other." Unlike the rhetoric and radical language that Khatami's superior, the supreme leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the president urged Muslims to strive, through effective and continued participation in the provision of peace and security at regional and global levels. The establishment of peace (is) a universal responsibility," Mr. Khatami said. The message that Mr. Khatami sent out was echoed by other speakers and officials from the Muslim World.

If the show of support that the Muslim World lent to Tehran during the past week continues and if a common agenda for the future is reached by the end of Thursday, then we are sure heading for an era of openness not only among Muslims, but also between Muslims and the West. The Tehran message cannot of course escape the attention of the West, especially the U.S. What we hope to see from now on is reciprocal moves and a relaxation of tension in the region both on the front of the peace process and the front of Iraq.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Sultan Hattah said the Arab leaders who have failed to date to hold a summit of their own to discuss pressing issues and achieve reconciliation among their countries should take advantage of being in Tehran to attend the Islamic summit to hold a meeting among themselves. Numerous outstanding issues in the Arab World await discussion, particularly the Arab-Israeli issue. The Israeli government's intransigence, the plight of the Palestinians and the deadlocked Middle East peace process, Hattah said. He said most of the moderate Arab countries which have accepted the peace process feel betrayed by Netanyahu's stands and his drive to destroy the Oslo accord concluded with the Palestinians and his determination to hold on to the occupied territories in Syria and Lebanon. The Arabs are also disappointed with the U.S. which continues to condone Israel's policies and cover up for them by trying to justify Netanyahu's actions, the writer said. He cited U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's latest statement culling on the Palestinians and the Israelis to take painful decisions to reach agreement as evidence that Washington continues to treat the victim on the same level as the aggressor rather than force Israel to comply with the will of the world community. The writer said the Islamic summit offers the Arabs a chance to secure support from the Islamic World for their peace endeavours.

Al Dustour's Jihad Momani paid tribute to Saudi Arabia's mediation efforts which led to a reconciliation between Qatar and Egypt and ended their propaganda warfare. The Arab World is full of differences and divisions among leaders and governments and requires more than one leader or one country to assume responsibility to end them, said the writer. Indeed, Momani said, differences among Arab leaders have resulted in hostilities among the Arab countries in the past decades and ruined many opportunities for joint Arab efforts at the political, economic and other levels. The writer suggested that the Arab World create a pan-Arab tribunal comprising experts and reputed judges to deal in an unbiased manner with disputes, including border disputes and the causes of differences that continue to mar Arab relations and deny the Arab societies many opportunities for progress and development. Once the Arab leaders succeed in defusing internal tensions, he added, the way will be paved for looking into prospects of collective efforts to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq and other Arab states.

Washington Watch

An immigration case that could set a bad precedent

SOME TIME before the end of December, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) will formally appeal an immigration judge's decision to allow Imad Hamad to remain in the United States and become a U.S. citizen. This INS action is but the latest chapter in Imad's 17-year saga in the U.S. It is also the most dangerous.

Imad Hamad is a 34-year-old Palestinian refugee from Lebanon. He entered the United States in 1980 as a student. Imad is married to a U.S. citizen and is employed as a social worker by Arab Community Centre for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) and as a community organiser by the Arab American Institute (AAI). He is the father of two children, and he and his wife, Arwa, are expecting their third child early next year.

In 1991, Arwa filed an immigration petition for Imad. After a series of administrative battles with immigration officials, it has now become clear why the INS has been so opposed to Imad's application to remain in the U.S.: they are charging that Imad, as a student in the 1980s, was involved in activities supportive of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The INS apparently has photographs of Imad at rallies and fund-raising dinners sponsored by the PFLP, especially during and after Israel's invasion of Lebanon.

I say "apparently" because the INS has refused to make its evidence public. In court proceedings, they have used a provision of the 1996 Anti-terrorism Law that allows the government to use secret evidence in deportation cases. In this instance, only the judge has been permitted to see the government's "evidence." Neither Imad nor his lawyer has been allowed to see any of the material.

However, the INS' efforts have been unsuccessful. When an immigration judge was shown the secret evidence during a September court proceeding, he rejected the government's case against Imad, finding nothing in the evidence that would justify deporting him from the

U.S. It was hoped that this would mark the end of the Hamad family's ordeal. However, on October 9, the INS declared its intention to appeal the decision and continue to press for Imad's deportation.

There are many troubling aspects to this case. First and foremost is the humanitarian dimension. Should the INS win, Imad and his family will be faced with two choices: either they will have to leave the U.S. and go into exile — despite the fact that Arwa and the children are U.S. citizens — or the family will be shattered with Imad being forced to leave alone, with his wife and children remaining behind.

Of great importance to many Americans are the constitutional aspects of this case. Imad's case represents the first time that the INS has actually used the "secret evidence" provision in an immigration court proceeding. Furthermore, in the INS' notice of intention to appeal, they specifically cite that their case against Imad is based on their contention that he has been associated with the PFLP. They do not argue that he has been engaged in any criminal activity — only associated with the group. Since the PFLP has now been declared one of the 30 groups designated by the State Department as "terrorist," any association with these groups has now become illegal and grounds for deportation.

These actions are deeply troubling to Americans who value the U.S. Constitution. Numerous past court cases have specifically ruled that the rights guaranteed by the constitution apply to all U.S. citizens and non-citizens who reside in the U.S. One of these guarantees individuals the right to know all evidence that is to be used against them and to confront that evidence and any accusers in an open court of law.

Imad's supporters know that he has not been engaged in any criminal or violent activity. Furthermore, they point to the fact that when the trial judge reviewed the secret evidence presented by the INS, he dismissed the case and allowed Imad to remain in the U.S. Why then

is the INS continuing to pursue Imad?

There is strong suspicion that the only basis for the government's litigation is Imad's activities as a student engaged in protest activities and fund-raising to support the humanitarian activities of the PFLP. To rule such activities illegal, as the 1996 Anti-terrorism Law does, also violates the constitutionally guaranteed rights of freedom of speech and freedom of association.

Finally, there is serious concern that the Anti-terrorism Law is being applied in a discriminatory manner. At present, secret evidence or "terrorist" association aspects of the law are being used only against Arabs. There are now more than a dozen cases in which Arabs are either in prison or facing deportation. Among these are the ten-year court battle of the Los Angeles 8 — seven Palestinians and the Kenyan wife of one — who have been charged with distributing Al Hadaf, the PFLP magazine. There is also the case of Mazen Al Najjar, who is imprisoned in Florida.

For all these reasons — humanitarian, constitutional and discriminatory — Imad's case (and those of the other Arab deportation cases) have drawn strong support from all sectors of the Arab American community. They have also garnered broad support from religious institutions, civil rights organisations, legal authorities and newspaper editorial writers across the U.S.

It is ironic, but also noteworthy, that it has fallen on the shoulders of Arab Americans to be the defenders of the U.S. constitution in this era. We know that if Imad loses, all Americans and future immigrants to America lose — and the constitution will be weakened.

We know that the guaranteed rights and freedoms of the constitution can never be taken for granted. In every era, those seeking to limit rights have threatened groups and individuals. Today Arab Americans are leading the struggle to defend the constitution — for ourselves and for future generations. With the broad support we are receiving, we are confident that we will win.

By Dr. James Zogby

The demise of dual containment

By Andrew Rathmell

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S Middle East advisers dreamt up the policy of "dual containment" in 1993. It was a reaction to the failure of previous administrations to maintain a balance of power in the Gulf by playing Iran and Iraq off against one another. With the defeat of Iraq and Iran's economy in a shambles, they calculated that all the U.S. needed to do was to contain the two radical states and, like the Soviet Union, they would soon give up on their opposition to the new, American dominated, order in the Middle East.

The policy was never intellectually coherent since it lumped together two quite different states, and it has come to look threadbare in recent months as America's Gulf war allies go their separate ways.

As articulated by Martin Indyk, now Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, dual containment calls for the continuation of sanctions on Iraq until Saddam Hussein goes and the U.N. declares Iraq free of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and long-range missiles. Iran is admonished to cease support for terrorism, end its drive to acquire nuclear weapons and halt its support to groups opposing the Middle East peace process.

Supporters of the policy claim that it has been modestly successful. The United States, backed by Britain, has used its weight in the U.N. Security Council to keep Iraq under the tightest sanctions regime ever imposed. U.N. weapons inspectors have, despite a systematic Iraqi campaign of obstruction and deception which periodically erupts into crisis, as it did in early November, dismantled most of Iran's banned weapons programmes. At the same time, the U.S. has entrenched a large military force in the Arabian Peninsula that will ensure Iraq has no opportunity to repeat its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

In regard to Iran, argue the policy's pro-

ponents, U.S. sanctions have weakened the Iranian economy by depriving it of foreign investment and slowing down its military build-up. American pressure on Russia, China and North Korea has made these countries more wary of giving Iran assistance in developing nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

The policy was never intellectually coherent since it lumped together two quite different states, and it has come to look threadbare in recent months as America's Gulf war allies go their separate ways.

Failure to meet its goals

Critics of the policy, however, argue that it has failed in its fundamental goals. Moreover, continuation of the policy is threatening wider U.S. interests. In Iraq, the U.S. had failed to curb its bête noire, Saddam Hussein. Although the CIA has spent millions of dollars supporting a variety of opposition groups and a number of coup attempts, Saddam Hussein's grip remains as firm as ever. The Kurdish "safe haven" of northern Iraq, which was intended to stand as a beacon of democracy to the rest of Iraq, has become instead an impoverished war zone where Kurdish warlords squabble over territory and influence. Neighbouring Turkey, Syria and Iran compete brutally for influence in the region while Saddam Hussein's security men are once again active in much of Iraqi Kurdistan. Moreover, even if the Iraqi

leader went, U.N. weapons inspectors admit that it may only be a matter of months before Baghdad could reconstitute its chemical and biological weapons programmes.

Dual containment has had even less success in forcing Iran to behave better. President Khatami's government is bent on pursuing more moderate domestic and, possibly, foreign policies but this has more to do with the domestic evolution of Iranian politics than with American pressure. Rather, continued American hostility has enabled hardliners in Tehran to blame the "arrogant powers" for their own policy failings. Even a more moderate Iranian leadership cannot but oppose the Middle East peace process, though significant Iranian support for terrorist groups is hard to prove. In addition, as demonstrated by a recent Israeli press campaign warning of Iran's long-range missile programmes, U.S. sanctions can only slow and not stop Iran's arms programmes. Indeed, overt U.S. hostility may be encouraging Iran to seek weapons of mass destruction in order to deter American military action.

Apart from the failure of dual containment to hit its targets, U.S. insistence on sticking to the hardline policy is leading to rows with its allies. France argues for a policy of "redemption" rather than dual containment's "damnation." Paris is keen to give Iran and Iraq more incentives to cooperate rather than simply isolating and punishing them.

While Paris agrees that Iraq's military might must be emasculated, it refuses to accept the Anglo-American approach of piling on ever more sanctions to force Saddam to comply. France therefore abstained when America and Britain first tried to push through Security Council Resolution 1134 in October. The resolution threatened the imposition of travel bans on Iraqi government personnel if Baghdad continued to obstruct U.N. arms inspectors. U.S. officials reject the French approach which they argue is, like Russia and China's similar approaches, motivated primarily by the desire to win lucrative oil contracts in Iraq.

Only Baghdad's continued refusal to allow U.N. inspectors access enabled the U.S. to push the resolution through in diluted form.

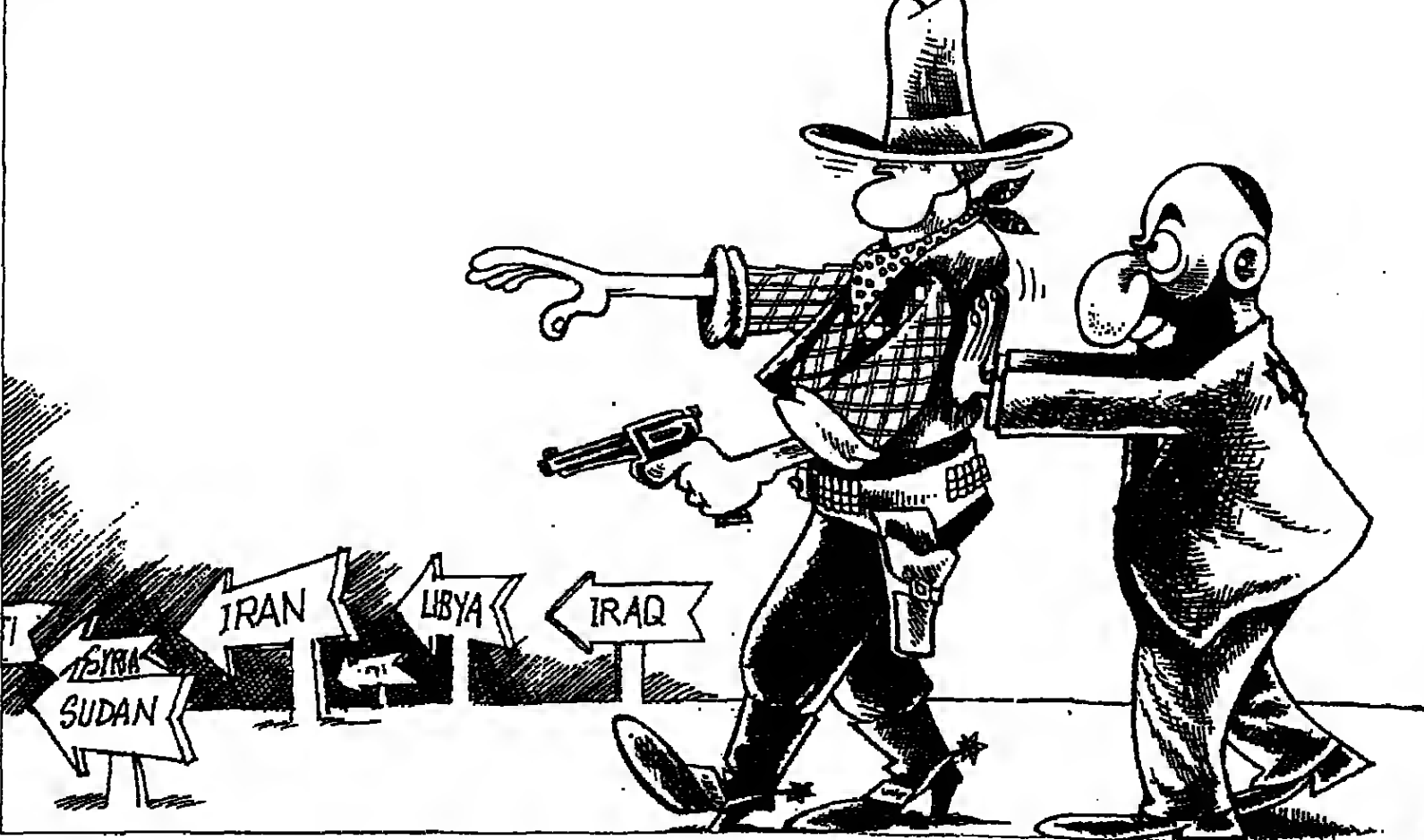
Policy paralysis

Transatlantic divisions over Iran go deeper. The European Union halted its "critical dialogue" with Iran after a German count blamed its clerical leaders for ordering the assassination of dissidents in Berlin. Nonetheless, EU ambassadors returned to Tehran on Nov. 13. What really infuriates the Europeans is America's use of extraterritorial legislation to punish countries doing trade with Iran. The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA), passed in 1996, mandates the U.S. president to impose commercial sanctions on foreign corporations whose investments in Iran contribute to the health of its economy, especially the energy sector. ILSA has been under fire since it was passed, but the issue became critical when France's Total, along with Russia's Gazprom and Malaysia's Petronas, concluded a \$2 billion deal with Iran to develop its South Pars gas field in the Gulf. The congressional authors of ILSA, led by New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato, immediately demanded that the White House impose sanctions on Total. America's allies went darkly of a full-blown trade war if Washington does so.

The Clinton administration is caught in a bind partly of its own making. Its demonisation of Iraq and Iran has made rational debate over policy options almost impossible. Republican congressmen, egged on by the powerful Israeli lobby, are ready to jump on any sign of Democratic weakness vis-à-vis America's favourite villains — Saddam Hussein and Islamic Iran. Although the administration is beginning to recognise the need to respond to the tentative overtures of Khatami's Iran, the State Department for instance has put the Iranian opposition group Mujahedin-e-Khalq on their terrorist list, it is caught in a straitjacket of domestic politics. The resultant policy paralysis means that the White House is now wasting its energies trying to avoid applying ILSA without arousing congressional ire. Its intellectual energy would be far better spent formulating more rational and effective policies that address the real security needs of the vitally important Gulf region.

Middle East International

M. KAHIL



LETTERS

Best wishes

To the Editor:

MORE Americans are with you every time. "Bihi" opens his mouth.

Delores Liberton
Texas
USA

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Arab funds abroad put at \$850b

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states own nearly \$850 billion in overseas investment although hundreds of billions have returned home over the past six years, a top Arab banker has said.

"According to various sources, migrant Arab investments are estimated at around \$850 billion," said Mahmoud Abdul Aziz, chairman of the Beirut-based Union of Arab Banks (UAB).

"Such funds could return when there is a right economic climate and political stability and security besides high investment return," he told the business weekly Emirates Today in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"These are essential conditions because those funds will not be repatriated by emotions and appeals," he said.

Mr. Abdul Aziz, an Egyptian, said nearly \$75 billion in overseas assets had found their way back into Egypt since it launched large-scale reforms in 1991 at the urging of the International Monetary Fund.

Around \$200 billion were also brought back to other Arab countries after the 1991 Gulf War, he added.

He gave no breakdown on Arab investments abroad but bankers said they are concentrated in the United States and other Western countries in equities and stocks, real estate and bank deposits.

Nearly half the funds are controlled by the oil-rich Gulf Cooperation Council, which groups Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Mr. Abdul Aziz said there were plans to set up a joint Arab bank to finance inter-Arab trade and investment. The Arab World Bank would have an authorized capital of \$400 million, of which \$100 million would be paid-up.

"We have contacted 10 large banks in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE for contributions. These countries will be key subscribers in this project, which will also issue shares three years after its establishment," he said.

National Conference on Cyber Economy urges security and protection of information systems

AMMAN (Petra) — Participants in the two-day National Conference on Cyber Economy Tuesday concluded their meetings with a call for enacting the necessary legislation to organize the information sector and to establish systems for the institutional protection of information.

At the conclusion of their meetings, organized by the National Information Centre with UNDP funding, participants came up with a set of recommendations designed to ensure security and protection of information systems and to reconsider con-

cepts of higher education to meet the future requirements.

They recommended the adoption of a national information policy and sectoral strategies in addition to drawing up the necessary plans for establishing the necessary infrastructure capable of meeting requirements of telecommunication networks, economic information including data bases, development of labour forces and regulating communications.

They stressed the need to direct scientific research towards information technol-

ogy applications, particularly in the areas of programming, Arabisation and electronic trade to develop the information industry in Jordan.

Participants discussed three working papers dealing with international competition and the Jordanian economy, specifications of Information Technology (IT) and intellectual property rights.

The first working paper reviewed the impact of international competition on national economy and its role in developing national capacities to utilise the atmosphere of peace in the Middle East to develop its

information systems to cope with the information community, which has become an essential part in developing a free economy.

The second working paper highlighted the importance of information technology in establishing industries mainly dependent on information and training of human resources.

The third working paper established a relation between protection of property rights and improvement of economic performance and attracting foreign investment.

Yemen prepares to set up stock market

SANAA (R) — Yemen has begun preparations to set up a stock exchange as part of the country's economic reform, Yemen's central bank governor said Monday. "Setting up a stock exchange is one of the important measures which the government is planning to take as part of the economic reforms begun in 1995," Central Bank Governor Ahmad Al-Reutiers. Yemen, a poor Arab state on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, is implementing economic reforms in coordination with the International Monetary Fund.

Europe puts 'Made in Israel' label under new scrutiny

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The European Union (EU) is taking a close look at products bearing the "Made in Israel" label, determined to prevent the Jewish state from getting tariff breaks on goods made by Palestinians or in Jewish settlements, an EU official said Tuesday.

Israeli officials and businessmen responded by accusing the Europeans of using economic blackmail to force concessions in the deadlocked peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

Under a 1975 free trade agreement, revised in 1994, Israeli products can be exported to the 15 nations of the European Union duty-free.

The Europeans have in the past closed their eyes to the fact that some Israeli goods were manufactured in whole or in part by Palestinian subcontractors in the occupied territories or in industrial zones in Jewish settlements.

But an official with the EU mission in Israel said Tuesday that the union now intended to take a closer look at the origin of all "Made in Israel" products.

EU officials say the change in attitude evolved during a recent dispute over exports to Europe of "Israeli orange juice" containing fruit juice from Brazil.

That matter was resolved during negotiations in Brussels late last month.

"Now the European Union hopes to verify the certificates of origin of other Israeli products," the EU official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"When an Israeli exporter puts his 'Made in Israel' label on a shirt manufactured in a workshop in the Gaza Strip, it raises some questions," he said.

The EU diplomat said more attention would also be paid to goods produced in Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

"On paper, these goods cannot benefit from tariff exemptions because the free trade agreement with Israel only concerns that state," he said.

The official was unable to provide an estimate of what percentage of Israeli exports to Europe might come from settlements or Palestinian factories.

Israeli officials and businessmen reacted angrily to the European stand.

"They are trying to use economic leverage to put pressure on Israel and facilitate the creation of an independent Palestinian state even before negotiations between the parties on a final peace agreement have begun," said Tzvi Tenney, director of the foreign ministry's economic affairs department.

"If Europe tries to make trouble for us, it's just going to discourage Israeli businessmen from contracting work out to the Palestinians and is going to contribute to Palestinian unemployment," he said.

Dan Propper, head of the Israeli industrialists association, agreed.

"The Europeans are just slowing things down, pretending to help the Palestinians, when in fact they are damaging the (Palestinian) economy," he told AFP, complaining that tougher EU scrutiny will hamper exports.

The EU official said the union also planned to make clear its displeasure over Israeli actions which hinder exports from the autonomous areas.

An interim association agreement came into effect in July between the EU and the Palestinian National Authority which permits goods made in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to enter union members duty-free.

"But the Palestinians have hardly been able to profit from the agreement because of repeated security closures of the territories which prevent the movement of goods," the EU official said.

He also complained of excessive delays in Israeli customs handling of Palestinian exports, which under interim peace accords must pass through Israeli ports and airports.

The European Union is Israel's main trade partner, with total exchanges worth \$26 billion a year.

Tunisia will raise taxes to cut deficit

TUNIS (R) — The Tunisian government Tuesday said it aims to use increased revenues to cut its 1998 net budget deficit to three per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) from the projected 3.1 in 1997.

An increase of one percentage point in value added tax to 18 per cent will offset sharply lower customs revenues following deregulation of international trade.

The government forecast inflation will be unchanged in 1998 from 3.8 per cent in 1997, but it expects GDP growth to drop slightly to 5.4 per cent from 5.6 per cent.

Prime Minister Hamed Karoui told parliament in his budget speech the 1998 budget deficit was projected at 690 million dinars (\$607.9 million) down from 806.5 million dinars expected for 1997.

The deficit was consistent with easing the pressure on external payments, controlling inflation and increasing opportunities for investment in the private sector, Mr. Karoui said.

He did not give details of increased revenues, but budget draft documents showed new measures to be officially released by the end of December included a rise in value added tax (VAT) to 18 per cent from 17 per cent.

VAT revenues were expected to rise by 19 per cent to 1,428

billion dinars from 1997. Increased revenues will limit borrowing to 3,322 billion dinars in 1998, Mr. Karoui added.

The draft budget projects total spending of 9,045 billion dinars in 1998, up 10.6 per cent from 1997.

Income is projected at 5,723 billion dinars, mainly from fiscal receipts that were put at 4,723 billion dinars, up 10.2 per cent from 1997.

Income from import taxes was expected to drop 17.2 per cent to 679 million dinars from 1997, due to a progressive dismantling of customs barriers within the framework of a free-trade zone accord signed with the European Union in 1995.

Income from consumption taxes is expected to rise by 17.5 per cent to 834 million dinars from 1997.

Non-fiscal receipts were put at 1.0 billion dinars, down 15.2 per cent from 1997 due to an expected drop in Tunisia's oil output. This included 100 million dinars revenue from the privatisation programme.

Domestic and external borrowing was projected to amount to 3,322 billion dinars, up 8.3 per cent from 1997. This included plans to borrow 550 million dinars from the international financial markets in 1998.

The gift of Christmas at

DAJANI Jewellers

Amra Forum Hotel Shops, Amman.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You want to buy really nice things for everybody on your list, but that's not going to be possible. You simply can't get red Ferrari convertibles for everyone. Not unless you get them at Toys-R-Us. Hey, that's not such a bad idea!

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You aren't as worried or flustered as you were yesterday. You feel confident, self-assured and secure. You may still run into a bit of a dilemma this morning, with somebody you love. He or she may make the foolish mistake of trying to tell you what to do. Be patient, calm and considerate, as you point out the error in that reasoning.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't try to implement innovations today. They'll only run into unexpected problems. You don't know how things will go until you've tried them out a few times. Today, you don't really have time for that. Instead, follow through with something you've already perfected.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Disagreements with your partner might be rooted in the past. You need to resolve an old issue. There could be a hassle later about money. You may have to turn down an invitation because you can't afford it. Well, you could if you weren't saving the money for another reason. Admit it. You didn't really want to go. If you did, you'd find a way.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) An older person will be very demanding today. You'll have to do the work if you want to get the money. It'll be a lot more fun if you remember it was your idea in the first place to take this job. That's especially important to keep in mind if things start going wrong this afternoon.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You and your sweetheart need to have a talk about a recent, upsetting issue. You'll come up with an answer so obvious you'll wonder why you missed it. Be careful around the middle of the day. The chances of an accident due to temporary inattention are high.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Go shopping today for something you need for the house. Chances are good you'll find a bargain. You need to take advantage of an opportunity when it presents itself — which is what's happening right now. Go out today and find the perfect thing, and get it wholesale.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Something you're trying to accomplish is almost more than you can figure out. Fortunately, you know someone else who can handle it. So instead of struggling delegate. Toss the ball to someone who can make the shot. The game is moving too quickly for you to take much time to think about it. Just hand the job over and get going.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Concentrate on the job at hand. Your paycheck could depend on it. There's too much to be done and not enough time to talk about it. So, don't ask a lot of questions. If you don't understand, figure it out. Look at it as a game and you'll do fine.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You and your mate have a very good relationship right now. You're getting a lot done and developing a bond you can trust. There are still several items that still need to get checked off. After that, you'll notice new opportunities popping up. Don't worry. Just stay busy and everything will get handled.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Either something you ordered won't be what you planned, or something could actually break. Watch out. Tomorrow night is better for entertaining. There will be friends dropping by all weekend. You still have a little time to get things put right before the gang shows up.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You could be a professional shopper. You can buy presents for people you don't even know. You get a scan of their personality type and you go right to the perfect item. That's what you could do as a service for a friend today. In exchange, learn a way to save money.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise-Zircon

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

1. Weighty block

5. Tacked on

10. Tarry

14. Highway subdivision

15. Be off

16. Take care of pressing problems

17. Teheran's land

18. Plateau

19. Category

20. Disfigure

21. Washington and Adams

23. Stoppages

25. Unnaturally pale

26. Off the briny

28. Romanov and Godunov

33. Singer Cleo

34. Secret cache

35. Smelly pile

36. River into The Wash

37. Marilyn, the mezzo-soprano

38. Served perfectly

39. Caned, province

40. Amble leisurely

41. Tony, the ballplayer

42. Mussolini and Balbo

44. Make a minister

45. Presidential initials

46. Of the ear

47. Rocketeer and Vanderbilt

52. Church vow

55. Piece without a title

56. Mafia muscle

57. Computer owner

58. Only just

59. Lander of cosmetics

30. Plane-crash grp.

31. Figure-skater's jump

32. Be taken aback

53. Questions

DOWN

1. Singer Whitman

2. "Doctor Zhivago" character

3. Sacco and Vanzetti

4. Cross or Grashaw

5. Assert without proof

6. "Mr. ... Goes to Town"

7. Kline movie

8. At any time

9. Neighbor of Pennsylvania

10. Slimpy swimsuit

11. Novelist Murdoch

12. Refrain from

13. Bring to a close

21. Fairway call

22. Animal fat

24. Solitary

26. Above it all

27. Alternative to a steam bath

28. Apple centers

29. Wacky

30. De Leon and Debs

31. Fountain of coins

32. Family car

34. Beginning

37. Terrorist captives

38. "Mephisto Waltz" star

40. Perfume cloud

41. Ben and Bobby

43. Sculptor's tool

44. Beginning

46. Ed, the actor

47. Cook book

48. Zenith

49. Faultless

50. Among the missing

51. Small amount

53. Cubicle feature

54. Spherical bodies

57. Actress Merkel

Peanuts

Dear Snoopy, I am still waiting for Andy and Olof to come here.

REMEMBER HOW I TOLD YOU THAT MY WEALTHY FRIEND MICKEY MOUSE LEFT SOME SHOES HERE FOR THEM?

Bad news! Last night somebody stole them!

"IF YOU SEE A COYOTE WEARING MICKEY MOUSE SHOES, GRAB HIM!"

Andy Capp

GER-GER

THAT LOANS ARRANGER DIDN'T SHOW UP, JACK.

I WAITED IN AND STAYED COMPLETELY SOBER. RIGHT UP TO OPENING TIME, AND FOR WHAT? PEOPLE

Mutt'n'Jeff

JEFF IS MY CAR FIXED? HOW ARE YOU MAKING OUT?

HEY JEFF! HOW ARE YOU MAKIN' OUT?

SH-H - I'M MAKING OUT I'M WORKING!

NIX, MUTT! PUT IT BACK QUICK, HERE COMES THE BOSS!

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

GLASBERGEN

"The label says 'All Natural Vitamins' but it's just a bottle of peas, corn and carrots."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

WORLD

RINGO

MUDINS

GOSPEN

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: A

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: COACH TRUTH PARTY OUTFIT
Answer: Steamy weather can turn into this on the news — A HOT TOPIC

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Study finds small and medium-size industries more feasible for Jordan

**** A STUDY** about the competitiveness of industrial products and the means to consolidate such a capability has shown that small and medium-size industries are more feasible to the Jordanian economy especially in the present conditions of rising unemployment and shortage of financing resources.

The study revealed that although investments in these industries did not exceed 38.1 per cent of the total capital of Jordanian industries, the small and medium-size ones have absorbed 81 per cent of the overall industrial workforce and contributed to about 66.8 per cent of total sales of Jordanian industries.

According to the study prepared by the Royal Scientific Society, the number of large industries is limited in the Kingdom as it does not represent more than 1.3 per cent of all industries. Small and medium-size industries represent 60.1 per cent and 38.6 per cent of all industries respectively.

The study covered 798 establishments of which 171 employed 50 workers, 105 employed between 20 and 49 workers and 522 establishments had less than 20 employees.

The concentration of most industries was found to be in the governorates of Amman and Zarqa which both accounted for 99.3 per cent of the overall working capital of Jordanian industries. The establishments in Amman and Zarqa also accounted for 98.7 per cent of the overall paid-up capital of industries and 99.8 per cent of loans granted to the Kingdom's industries.

The smaller the industries, the higher was the rate of non-Jordanian workers, the study found. Specifically, the rates of non-Jordanian workers were 4.0 per cent, 11.4 per cent and 15.9 per cent of all employees at large, medium and small-size industries respectively.

Spending on training was as small as JD14 per worker each year. "Such a situation reflects negatively on the capabilities of industries to continue to improve the quality of their products," the study said. It also showed that wages were low especially for non-Jordanian workers as the average pay per worker in industrial establishments was JD2,700 per year.

The study highlighted that large industries (except the mining ones) and, to a lesser extent, the medium-size industries depend to a great extent on imported raw material input and other imported production elements. Accordingly, the study said, this dependence threatens to rob our industries from the certificate of origin which requires 40 per cent or more in local value added input.

The study indicated that nearly half of Jordan's industrial investments are unjustified and unfeasible due to the malfunctioning of about half the production capacity available for Jordanian industries.

"There is a proportional relationship between the number of producers of the same products and the utilisation of available production capacity due to the pressure on manufacturers to improve the quality and the prices of their products," the study concluded (Al Dustour).

Western-style superstores in Jordan prosper on strong demand, change in consumption patterns

By Suha Ma'ayah
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Western-style superstores are mushrooming across the capital to cater for a growing demand from across-the-board customers.

In a country where 30 per cent of the 4.5 million population live below the poverty line, the glittery supermarkets are opening in the more affluent parts of Amman.

Their owners say strong demand and a change in consumption patterns, sparked by Jordan's socio-economic modernisation, prompted investors to launch multi-million-dollar shopping enterprises.

"We cater to all segments of society and our prices are structured on a popular basis," said Azzam Masri, general manager of Safeway, the first superstore that opened in Amman in 1991.

Days ago, the Jordanian Investments & Supplies Co. W.L.L., which owns Safeway, opened its second 14-million dinar shopping outlet on the airport highway. It offers around-the-clock services seven days a week to its customers.

"The Jordanian consumer prefers shopping from one nearby place for economical reasons and because of the laziness that is inherited by our population," said Mr. Masri.

Like other similar outlets, the new chain store sells anything and everything — from bread, chewing-gum and meat to kitchen appliances and stationary.

Most businessmen, traders and economists have welcomed the latest state-of-the-art operations of these chains, years ago a dream for many Jordanians.

These outlets are offering discounts on selected items on a regular basis as they compete to gain a slice of the market. Splash big promotional ads in local dailies and offer shopping from home — all new concepts in Jordan.

But many are questioning the feasibility of a growing number of superstores since the consumer market in Jordan remains limited because of the general low wages and large families.

They say the new chains have spurred competition in a market-oriented economy which will be in the interest of the customers who can choose to buy their goods from anywhere they want.

However, they warn that the entry of such big shopping conglomerates will eventually be at the expense of the small and medium-size groceries and supermarkets found in most neighbourhoods.

They will have to improve services or gradually fizzle out, they say.

Mr. Nizar Darwazeh, president of Food Traders Association, said growing competition between big stores and smaller groceries was a good move.

"In today's market, demand is steadily growing towards big stores especially that the product packaging is designed for the customer's convenience," he said in an interview.

"The market share will be affected to a certain extent but this impact is desirable," he said. "Groceries will have to raise their standards, provide better services for consumers, improve display and ensure cleanliness at all times," Mr. Darwazeh added.

Others said the expansion of superstores will be at the expense of small and medium-size supermarkets and will not affect grocery shops who rely on neighbourhood demand.

"Groceries sell certain items for emergencies, but the customer's major shopping will be geared towards big stores," Mr. Masri said.

Anton Faghali, general manager of Al-Ahliyah Abella Superstore, which began operations in Amman in 1993, said he did not foresee major competition from similar giants.

"We are out of the competition because our products cater for classic customers and we have an exclusive service," he said. "Many of our items are not available in other places," he explained.

Hani Ashour, managing director of C-Town, a major shopping outlet, said competition "resulted in better services and prices for the consumer."

Mr. Ashour's company is working on setting up "the Amman Town Centre" — Jordan's first shopping mall modelled along American lines. The \$10 million project will open next summer.

"We believe that the Jordanian consumer deserves to be treated in a professional manner," Mr. Ashour said. "The customer should enjoy shopping in a comfortable environment in which everything would be available at the same place."

The three superstores declined to give figures on their turnover and profits.

However, in a country where the gap between rich and poor is yawning, shopping for the less-fortunate Jordanians from superstores remains a fat-fetched dream.

"On weekends, when we have nothing to do, I take my kids to one of those giant stores and we take a walk inside and look at products on the shelves," said civil servant Ahmad Salam, a father of six who earns 150 dinars a month.

"Sometimes, we might find something from the discount corner, or we buy vegetables which are similar in price to goods sold in outside shops," he added.

The superstores have absorbed hundreds of Jordan's unemployed, officially put at 15 per cent and unofficially at between 22 and 27 per cent.

But most of them complain they are facing competition from the country's civil and military consumer societies that sell basic commodities at subsidised prices to over 250,000 beneficiaries.

While the civil consumer society pays some customs on imported goods, the army cooperative is exempted from such taxes.

However, cooperative customers always complain they can hardly find what they want because items on display are limited and imported goods remain a rarity.

"Their prices are less than the private sector by 40 per cent to 70 per cent which makes it hard for the private sector to compete," said Mr. Masri.

"These societies are hindering operations of superstores and supermarkets and are discouraging major shopping centres from expansions," he said, adding that they have filed official complaints.

"We, as Safeway, are willing to expand in all governorates provided that the government curbs the civil and military shopping outlets and let them adhere to their charter," Mr. Masri said.

Supply ministry officials were not available for comment but a civil consumer society official disagreed.

"Our customers have nothing to do with theirs," he said. "Ours look at commodities important for their day-to-day survival, not for luxuries which they cannot afford anyway."

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7841	0.6076	1.4618	128.83	1.4214	1756.00	2.0220	3.4035	
DE Mark	0.5674		0.3382	0.8148	72.37	0.7815	978.71	1.1273	3.3490
GB Sterling	1.6467	2.9824		2.4045	213.57	2.3392	2889.82	3.3270	8.8856
CH Franc	0.6841	122.65	0.4152		89.81	0.9720	1280.81	138.28	4.1049
JP Yen	0.0077	1.3816	0.4675	1.1248		1.0941	13.82	165.69	4.8241
CA Dollar	0.7035	1.2389	0.4197	1.0007	1.09		1213.86	1.3963	4.1480
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0219	0.3498	0.0832	1353.75	0.8094		11.52	3.4197
NL Guilder	0.4949	88.66	0.3002	72.25	64.16	0.7026	867.88		2.9687
FR Franc	0.1666	0.2988	0.1011	24.3227	21.60	0.2367	33.57	33.5700	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	0.7080	3.7506	0.3770	3.6410	0.3051	3.6728	1.5310	3.4035	
Jordan Dinar	1.4124		5.2973	0.5326	5.1427	0.4309	5.1876	2162.43	4.8072
Saudi Riyal	0.2668	0.1888		0.1005	0.97	0.0913	0.98	408.21	0.5075
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	9.9483		8.86	0.8092	8.74	4061.01	8.0279
Qatar Dinar	0.2745	0.1945	1.0301	1.0301		0.0833	1.01	420.49	0.8348
Kuwait Dinar	3.2782	2.3209	12.2947	12.2939	11.94		12.04	5018.85	0.9348
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	1.0206	0.8913	0.0831		416.85	0.9267
Lebanese 1000	0.65	0.4624	2.4497	0.2462	2.3782	0.1992	2.3980		2.2231
Egyptian	0.2938	0.2080	1.1020	0.1108	1.0698	0.0895	1.0791	448.83	

Energy									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
Brent	17.75	18.05							
WT Texas	18.70	18.85							
Bonny	17.75	18.05							
Dubai	17.05	17.25							
UL Gas	185.00	184.00							

JOD Cross Rates			Currency Deposit Rates (Bld)					
Currency	Buy	Sell	Period	1- Month	3- Months	6- Months	9- Months	1- Year
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	USD	5.89	5.84	5.87	6.93	6.98
GB Sterling	1.1657	1.1715	GBP	7.44	7.62	7.56	7.56	7.62
DE Mark	0.3948	0.3968	JPY	0.40	0.42	0.38	0.34	0.38
CH Franc	0.4349	0.4373	DEM	3.69	3.72	3.78	3.85	3.98
FR Franc	0.118	0.1196	CHF	3.48	4.15	3.71	3.84	3.95
JP Yen	0.5418	0.5445	CHF	1.74	1.56	1.68	1.78	1.81
NL Guilder	0.3504	0.3522	ITL	6.13	5.98	5.86	6.28	6.26
IT Lira	0.4031	0.4061						

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cts	Open	Close
New York	DOW JONES	8073.04	-37.8	-0.47	8111.09	8051.65	8110.64		
New York	S&P 500	877.5	-4.77	-0.48	882.37	874.81	882.37		
London	FT-SE 100	8184.1	-23.3	-0.45	8200.4	8156.3	8197.4		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16886.51	654.94	3.44	16888.5	16184.7	16191.8		
Paris	CAC 40	2959.4	26.93	0.92	2968.75	2932	2932.47		
Frankfurt	DAX	4184.91	-38.45	-0.91	4209.34	4184.47	4223.38		

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - 518117/1										
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 09/12/1997										
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV. %	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRANS.	VALUE TRADED JO	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
346,000	749,000	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	4	820	271420	331.00	331.00	-
2,340	1,480	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	2	0.00	17	29370	551840	1.87	1.84	-03-
3,600	1,830	BANK OF JORDAN	6.3	0.00	11	6950	13732	1.96	2.00	-04-
1,190	890	MID.EAST INV.BK.	72.9	0.00	26	23050	25463	1.07	1.11	+04-
2,580	2,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	10.3	0.00	8	9900	25725	2.61	2.60	-01-
4,180	1,850	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	10.4	0.00	13	14691	28840	1.98	1.96	-
1,030	730	JOR. GOLF BANK	4.3	9.72	14	13250	9668	0.73	0.72	-01-
4,050	2,660	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	12.9	3.78	6	1120	2836	2.66	2.54	-12-
3,900	3,080	JOR. INV. TRD. BANK	24.6	0.00	4	750	2871	3.80	3.85	+02+
4,990	2,500	ARAB BANKING CO.	19.0	0.00	4	261	682	2.63	2.63	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 236.90			CHNG: -0.13		107	364492	933075			
2,020	1,590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.5	7.65	4	2200	4320	1.93	1.96	+03+
2,300	1,200	HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.5	0.00	2	2500	3150	1.20	1.26	+06+
2,350	1,820	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	8.6	4.55	9	64559	130774	1.93	2.00	+07+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 118.20			CHNG: +0.73		18	62529	138244			
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.4	5.15	10	10100	19594	1.94	1.94	-
4,030	1,320	18810 ELECTRICITY	15.4	4.44	1	500	1295	2.52	2.59	+07+
810	480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	24.6	0.00	2	125	60	5.1	4.8	-03-
7,000	3,400	AD-OUTSOUR.	29.6	3.52	4	2000	3550	7.00	7.18	+10+
3,900	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.8	0.00	4	2250	8405	3.73	3.75	-02-
1,100	900	SARRA EDUCATION	9	0.00	4	2000	1845	0.93	0.92	-01-
2,230	1,630	UNIFIED CO.	8.0	6.55	7	2100	3525	3.70	1.68	-02-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 108.27			CHNG: +0.03		29	17575	38278			
4,450	3,010	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.5	3.62	17	7037	21347	3.05	3.04	-01-
4,140	3,050	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.0	2.78	14	95323	34312	3.60	3.60	-
11,160	9,200	JOR. PETROL-REFINERY	10.1	8.50	4	121	1266	10.50	10.46	-04-
3,380	1,330	INDUSTRIAL CORN. MGR.	9	0.00	1	500	725	1.45	1.45	-
4,700	3,440	ARAB PHARM. HAFI.	11.2	4.90	12	1573	6425	4.09	4.08	-01-
1,670	1,020	JOR. PIPES MANFACT.	16.9	5.88	15	8950	8138	1.37	1.36	-
8,500	5,000	ARAB CHEM. OTRECH.	21.2	4.35	1	100	690	6.80	6.90	+10+
6,000	4,400	DAR ALDAMA OV. INV.	13.5	4.55	15	20500	167610	5.43	5.50	+07+
3,850	2,228	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.4	10.87	1	805	233	2.33	2.30	-03-
690	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.7	0.00	3	1500	690	4.46	4.46	-
1,230	780	ARAB PAPER CORP. TRD.	23.8	0.00	4	510	4017	0.78	0.78	-
1,380	700	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	1	3200	2340	0.70	0.70	-
770	510	NATIONAL INDS.	9	0.00	1	550	292	0.53	0.53	-
1,200	420	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	1	500	210	0.42	0.42	-
920	530	JOR. ROPEWORK INDS.	9	0.00	2	500	280	0.57	0.56	-01-
890	350	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	9	0.00	1	1800	900	0.60	0.60	-
1,670	1,210	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	15.4	5.79	1	450	545	1.21	1.21	-
1,880	880	UNIV. MODN. INDS.	9	2.25	8	8800	7592	0.87	0.86	-01-
1,410	690	JOR. INOS. RESOURCES	9.5	14.08	19	11970	8563	0.71	0.71	-
1,120	1,320	NATL. CHLORINE	4.73	4	4	2000	2960	1.48	1.48	-
1,070	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.3	0.00	4	2600	7314	0.89	0.89	-
2,060	1,340	EL -ZAY READY WEAR	48.6	0.00	2	450	621	1.38	1.38	-
1,330	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.7	0.00	7	1346	1640	1.22	1.22	-
840	570	MID.EAST COMPLEX	7.5	16.39	10	5250	3153	0.62	0.61	-01-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 117.05			CHNG: -0.07		146	18725	586223			
GRAND TOTAL										
INDEX: 171.17			CHNG: -0.09		297	638581	1658819			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 09/12/1997										
610	360	JOR. TRADS FAC.	9.6	0.00	3	2900	1044	0.36	0.36	-
800	560	UNION INV. 507	9	0.00	5	22000	4840	0.72	0.72	-
570	360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	2	3600	1476	0.41	0.41	-
980	720	AL-SHARQ INV.CO.	9	0.00	2	2870	11815	0.78	0.80	+02+
1,980	1,050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	8	0.00	3	15050	30103	1.98	2.05	+07+
390	140	JOR. INDS. MATCH-JEMCO	8	0.00	1	250	40	0.17	0.16	-01-
300	130	ARAB INTL. INV. CO.	35.6	4	1500	4	450	0.30	0.30	-
750	380	NATL. MULT. ENG. NANTICO	9	0.00	10	74550	10066	0.41	0.41	-
640	370	HAZKAR OIBS & MOULDS	9	0.00	1	300	114	0.38	0.38	-
410	220	ARAB ELECT. INDS.	9	0.00	5	27000	10810	0.41	0.42	+01+
1,400	860	UNION TOBACCO 75/	9	0.00	5	75000	17500	1.36	1.40	+04+
730	550	NATL. PHARM.	9	0.00	1	400	260	0.65	0.65	-
820	490	NATL. FOODS	8	0.00	38	131250	66033	0.51	0.50	-01-
1,000	730	ROBBER FOOD IND. 75/	8	0.00	10	4900	2735	0.73	0.70	-03-
GRAND TOTAL										
INDEX: 431.08			CHNG: -0.07		98	431088	467719			

1: New 12 months high
N: New 12 months low
S: Stock dividend during the past 12 months
L: Listed during the past 12 months
P: P/E ratio 100 or more
g: Negative P/E
E: Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

Panthers puncture Cowboys NFL playoff hopes

DALLAS (AFP) — So much for the Dallas dynasty. American football's crumbling Cowboys are now ready for rebuilding.

For the second year in a row, a Dallas loss to Carolina signaled the end of the road for the 1996 Super Bowl winners, who fell to the Panthers 23-13 here Monday in a showdown of clubs with slim playoff hopes.

Carolina's Kerry Collins threw two touchdown passes and John Kasay kicked three field goals to ensure the Cowboys cannot win the National Football League NFC East division, something they had done since 1991.

Last year the Cowboys were beaten by Carolina in the quarter-finals, signaling they would not defend their crown. Collins overcame a sprained left ankle and completed 16-of-28 passes for 136 yards as the Panthers matched Detroit

at 7-7, one-half game behind Washington for the final NFC playoff berth with two games to go.

Troy Aikman was 14-of-26 for 180 yards and a touchdown for Dallas, oow 6-8 and needing two final victories plus losses by several other teams to avoid missing the playoffs for the first time since 1990.

Aikman was sacked four times for 42 yards, the last for a 25-yard loss on a fourth-down-and-one play with Dallas trailing 20-13 in the closing minutes.

Aikman was chased by Carolina defensive end Mike Fox and safety Chad Cota before dropping to the ground at his own 30-yard line. The play set up a deciding field goal by Kasay with 56 seconds to play.

"Our defence played a hell of a game," Carolina coach Dom Capers said.

Armstrong on Olympic comeback trail

SYDNEY (AFP) — Seoul Olympic Games 200m freestyle champion Duncan Armstrong is making a comeback to the swimming pool at the age of 29 and hoping to reach the next Olympics in Sydney.

Armstrong, who lost his 1988 medal last year, will take part in six events this weekend at the Australian Institute of Sport, when most of his rivals will be around 10 years younger.

Among them will be Michael Klim and Matthew Dunn, two of Australia's best hopes for the Sydney 2000 Games, and Russia's Olympic star Alexander Popov.

Armstrong said his age did not matter. "It is not a contact sport. It's one competitor per lane. It has no bearing on what I do."

He added: "I'm happy with my strength and my stroke is improving. If I looked for a challenge I could not find a better one."

The Australian veteran last swam competitively at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, in the 4x200m relay when the team were disqualified because Kieren Perkins broke early.

This weekend, Armstrong is entered in the 50m, 100m, 200m and 400m freestyle and 100m and 200m butterfly.

Armstrong said he lost his gold medal when he lent it to an Australian newspaper last year for a photo shoot. This partly motivated his return.

"It's mostly Sydney and my two sons. I would love them to see me swim," he said. "And I would love to win another gold to replace my lost medal. That really cuts me up sometimes."

Sprewell and coach share apologies

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP)

Banished basketball star Latrell Sprewell and coach P.J. Carlesimo, the man he choked and threatened to kill a week ago, have traded telephone apologies.

Kurt Robinson, a member of the legal team backing the suspended National Basketball Association player, said Sprewell and his lawyer, famed O.J. Simpson trial attorney Johnny Cochran, will speak Tuesday.

Sprewell has a 32 million-dollar contract terminated by his club, the Golden State Warriors, after choking and hitting Carlesimo. The NBA then banned Sprewell from playing for any club for a year.

Some have called the punishment harsh. Am Tellum, Sprewell's agent, has said Carlesimo, who is white, has a history of verbal abuse to black players, although NBA union officials have said race is not an issue.

According to Robinson, Sprewell and Carlesimo exchanged telephone apologies, each accepting the other's and hoping to resolve the issue that has polarized the NBA's predominantly white executives and predominantly black players.

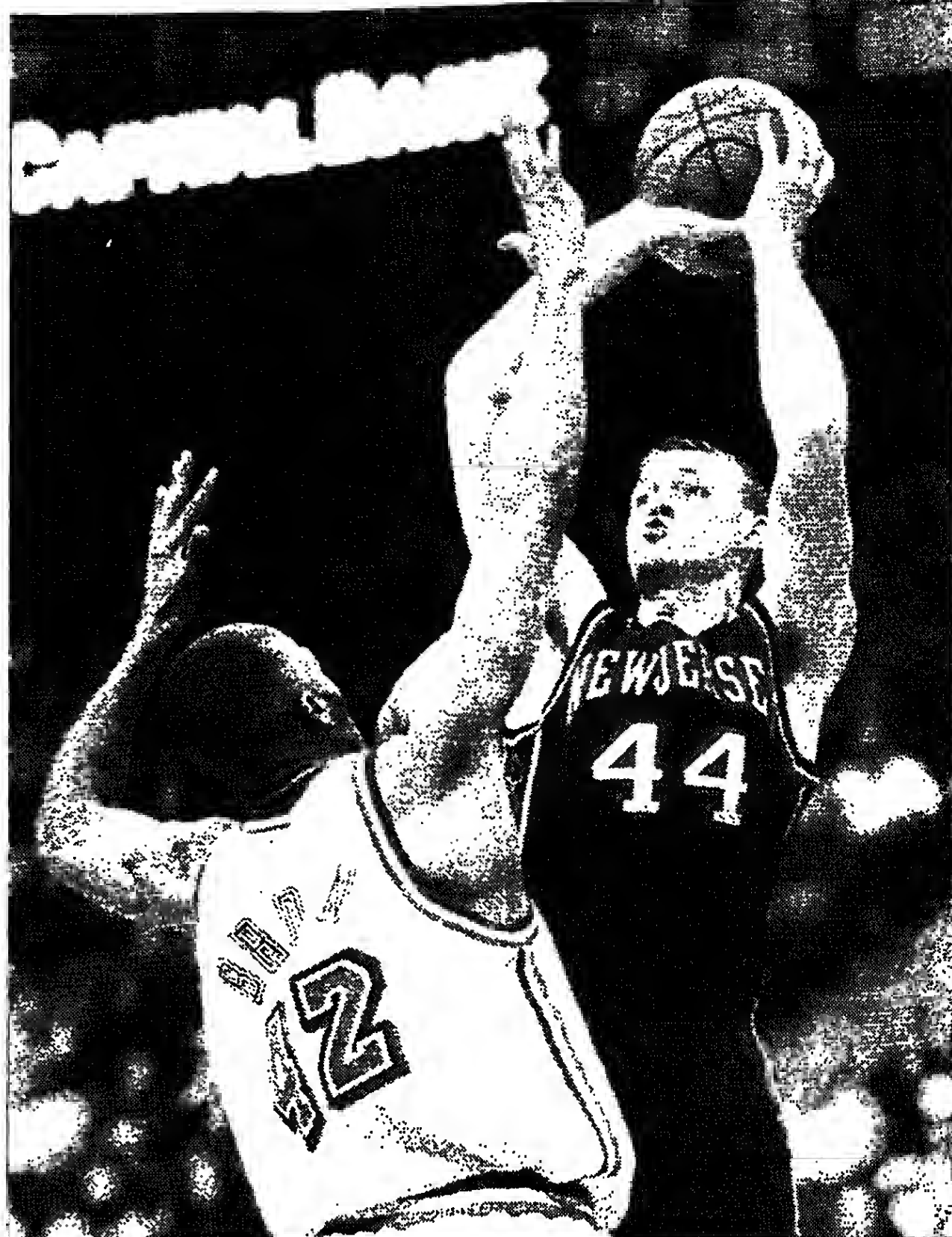
"The apology was accepted, and he apologized to Spre," Robinson said. "Sprewell is concerned with the man-to-man issues with Carlesimo."

Robinson said Sprewell could not apologize in person to Carlesimo because he is banned from NBA venues, but did not explain why that would prevent a meeting from taking place elsewhere.

Scheduled to attend Tuesday's news conference are Sprewell, Cochran, Tellum and officials from the NBA Players Association, which has filed a grievance on Sprewell's firing and unprecedented insubordination banishment.

Sprewell had earlier apologized to family, fans and friends but reportedly had to be talked out of blasting Carlesimo again verbally in last Wednesday's original apology.

Sprewell, 27, was 10th in the league in scoring at 21.4 points a game for the Warriors, 2-15.



New Jersey Nets forward Keith Van Horn (44) shoots over the defence of Miami Heat forward P.J. Brown December 8 during the first quarter of NBA play at Miami Arena. Van Horn returned to the lineup today after spending several weeks out with an ankle injury (Reuters photo)

Cavs, Pacers keep winning; 76ers beat Knicks

INGLEWOOD, California (AP) — The Cleveland Cavaliers and Indiana Pacers kept their winning streaks alive in different ways.

The Cavs won their eighth straight game Sunday night, beating the Los Angeles Lakers 94-84.

Wesley Person scored 22 points for Cleveland, which withstood a furious fourth-quarter rally to hand the Lakers their first home loss of the season after eight victories.

"This is a pretty good win for us," Person said. "Our defence is coming together."

The Pacers extended their winning streak to six when Reggie Miller hit a baseline jumper at the overtime buzzer for a 99-97 victory over the Phoenix Suns.

"I always like to silence the crowd on the road," Miller said. "That's what separates the good players from the great players. It was me against 19,000 people screaming and clapping. When I hit the shot, it was so quiet."

Miller took a midcourt inbound pass from Mark Pope, drove to the baseline and fired an arching shot over Jason Kidd that swished through as the horn sounded at Phoenix.

Miller, who didn't score in the first half, finished with 19 points as Indiana won its fifth straight on the road on coach Larry Bird's 41st birthday.

Danny Manning scored 25 points for the Suns, who rallied from a 10-point deficit in the final minutes to force overtime.

Cleveland Cavaliers 94, Los Angeles Lakers 84: In the Los Angeles suburb of Inglewood, Kobe Bryant almost single-handedly brought the Lakers back, scoring 14 of his 21 points in the first six minutes of the fourth quarter as Los

Angeles cut a 19-point deficit to eight.

The Lakers got even closer when Elden Campbell hit a jumper and Eddie Jones made two free throws to cut Cleveland's lead to 83-79 with 2:18 remaining. But Person hit a clutch 3-pointer and the Cavs went on to win their sixth straight on the road.

Cleveland outrebounded the Lakers 49-37.

Philadelphia 76ers 93, New York Knicks 78: At Philadelphia, Allen Iverson scored 27 points and Jerry Stackhouse had 20 as the 76ers ended a three-game losing streak.

Allan Houston had 27 points for the Knicks, who have lost three of their last four and four straight road games.

Patrick Ewing scored New York's first six points but was held to four the rest of the way and sat out the entire fourth quarter.

Detroit Pistons 93, Toronto Raptors 83: In Toronto, reserve Jerome Williams had 20 points and 11 rebounds as the Detroit Pistons snapped a four-game road losing streak.

John Wallace scored 23 points for the Raptors, who extended their franchise-record losing streak to 16 games.

Grant Hill had 20 points and 10 rebounds for the Pistons, while Damon Stoudamire had 21 points and nine assists for Toronto.

Milwaukee Bucks 97, Seattle SuperSonics 91: In Milwaukee, Terrell Brandon, who came to Milwaukee in a three-way trade that sent Vin Baker to Seattle, scored 20 points and the Bucks overcame Baker's 29 points to beat the SuperSonics.

Ray Allen also scored 20 for Milwaukee, while Armon Gilliam

added 19 and Glenn Robinson 18.

Baker, traded to Seattle on Sept. 25 in a deal that brought Brandon and Tyrone Hill to the Bucks from Cleveland, hit a baseline shot that pulled Seattle to 91-89 with 52 seconds left. But Allen countered with a basket and Baker picked up his fifth and six fouls over the next 30 seconds.

Denver Nuggets 100, Los Angeles Clippers 92: At Denver, Laphonso Ellis scored a season-high 21 points and the Nuggets overcame a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

Ellis sparked the rally with nine fourth-quarter points as the Nuggets outscored Los Angeles 30-14 in the final period and won for only the second time in 17 games.

Bobby Jackson added 17 points and Danny Fortson 15 for the Nuggets. Eric Piatkowski and Rodney Rogers each scored 18 for the Clippers, who lost their seventh straight on the road.

Sacramento Kings 99, Golden State Warriors 84: At Sacramento, Mitch Richmond and Corliss Williamson each scored 24 points as the Kings snapped a six-game losing streak.

Williamson, held without a field goal in the first half, scored 10 points in a 1:57 span of the third quarter as the Kings broke a 45-45 tie and went ahead to stay.

Joe Smith scored 24 points for Golden State, which played its third game since star Latrell Sprewell was suspended for attacking coach P.J. Carlesimo.

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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)

Seeks qualified Jordanian professional with background in gender and development for vacant post of **Programme Officer** in its Regional Office for Western Asia located in Amman.

Duties and Responsibilities

Under the guidance and supervision of the regional Programme Officer will have the following duties and responsibilities:

- prepare, review and appraise project proposals ensuring conformity with UNIFEM's programme strategy as stated in the business plan and the regional programme annual work plan;
- manage and monitor portfolio of on-going projects in Western Asia, prepare analytical and progress reports on project experience and advise on management and policy issues emerging from UNIFEM support project;
- follow-up on resource mobilization activities for fund raising for new projects;
- maintain consultations with governments, implementing agencies, women's organizations, multi-and bilateral donors and liaise with other UN organizations and agencies with regard to the programme;
- supervise the administrative and financial management of the Amman office and manage a system of communication with UNIFEM project managers in the region.

Required Qualifications

- a post-graduate University degree (minimum Master's degree) in social sciences;
- specialized training in gender and development is an asset;
- a minimum of three years of relevant professional experience including field work and management and development of GID programmes;
- fluency in written and spoken Arabic and English;
- highly developed inter-cultural and inter-personal skills enabling the applicants to work closely with governments, UN-agencies, NGO's and women's groups and participate effectively in team work.

Candidates are requested to submit their applications including a complete curriculum vitae no later than 24 December 1997 in a sealed envelope marked "UNIFEM Application" to

NUDP, P.O. Box 35286, Amman 11180

or deliver it by hand to the receptionist in the UNDP office, Hirbawi Building, Obadah Ibn Al-Samit Street, Shmelsani, Amman. All applications will be treated in strict confidence.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 677420	CINEMA TEL: 677420	CINEMA TEL: 677420	CINEMA TEL: 677420	CINEMA TEL: 677420
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Hisham Yanes Theatre
	HERCULES AND THE AMAZON WOMEN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Jim Carrey ... in LIAR — LIAR Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi ... in AL MASEER (Arabic) Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	CONCORD "1" Rowan Atkinson ... in MR. BEAN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" SLEEP WALKERS Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only	ABDOUN Harrison Ford ... in AIR FORCE ONE Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN Mel Gibson & Julia Roberts ... in CONSPIRACY THEORY Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas For reservations call: 641155, 625156

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Nagano joins anti-land mine campaign

TOKYO (AFP) — Nagano Olympic organisers will stage a series of fund-raising events to aid land mine victims after inheriting the campaign from the late Princess Diana, who was to visit Nagano during the Games in February. The events will include a charity walk in Tokyo on February 11, led by Chris Moon, an amputee British crusader against anti-personnel mines who works for Britain's non-governmental organisation Halo Trust. Participation fees are 2,000 yen (\$15) for adults, 1,000 yen for junior high and high school students and 500 yen for elementary school students and younger. Proceeds will be used to help finance land mine removal projects in Cambodia, organized by the Association to Aid Refugees and Halo Trust. Moon, 35, who had his right arm and right leg amputated in March 1995 when he stepped on a mine during a mine-sweeping operation in Mozambique, is also one of the final torch relay runners at the Olympic opening ceremony. Princess Diana made a trip to Bosnia and Angola shortly before her death in Paris at the end of August, helping focus world attention on landmine victims. The Nagano Olympic organising committee will also hold a similar charity walk in Nagano on February 1 and several other peace appeal events, including a daily auction of T-shirts and personal items donated by medalists.

'Big George' plans to fight at 50

LAS VEGAS (AFP) — George Foreman ended his latest retirement after only 16 days, saying he wants to fight one more time here at age 50. The former world heavyweight boxing champion lost a controversial decision to Shannon Briggs on November 22 in Atlantic City but said he plans to fight at least one more time before hanging up his gloves. "In 13 months from today, I'll be 50 years old. I would like to have one last boxing match in Las Vegas — a 50-year-old man enters the ring with a top contender and then calls it quits," Foreman said. "But someone's really got to give me a good whoopin'. I don't want anyone to slap me around and abuse me. I want a whoopin'." Foreman said his career was over after losing to Briggs, the two-time champion's first bout in almost seven months. Foreman fell to 76-5 but his comeback after an idle decade will be forever remembered for a 1994 title-taking triumph over fellow American Michael Moorer.

Stockton returns to Jazz

SALT LAKE CITY (AFP) — John Stockton, a member of the 1992 and 1996 U.S. Olympic gold medal "Dream Team" squads, returned to the Utah Jazz here Monday after missing eight weeks following knee surgery. Stockton recovered in the minimum amount of time doctors said it would take for him to return to the National Basketball Association club. More pessimistic predictions had him out for another month. The All-Star guard missed the first 18 Jazz games after left knee surgery October 13 to remove cartilage, ending a streak of 609 consecutive games for the NBA all-time leader in assists and steals. Utah placed rookie point guard Troy Hudson on the injured list to make room on the roster for Stockton. The Jazz lost four of their first six games but NBA Most Valuable Player Karl Malone and guard Howard Easley helped lift Utah to an 11-7 record, one game behind pace-setter Houston in the Midwest Division. Stockton averaged 14.4 points and 10.5 assists last season as the Jazz reached the NBA finals for the first time.

Russia signs Adidas deal

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's National Olympic Committee President Vitaly Smirnov on Tuesday signed a contract with sports equipment firm Adidas to fit out the Russian team at the Winter Olympics in Japan next February. Under the agreement, Adidas will equip more than 260 members of the official Russian delegation to the Nagano games.

Leverkusen's Kirsten faces ban

LEVERKUSEN (AFP) — Bayer Leverkusen striker Ulf Kirsten faces an eight-week ban after brutally elbowing Schalke's Thomas Linke in last weekend's 0-0 draw between the sides. German authorities are investigating whether Kirsten, named player of the month last month, should be hauled over the coals for "unsporting conduct". Linke was at first thought to have suffered a fractured jaw but doctors diagnosed severe bruising and a split lip following the incident which was missed by match officials. Schalke manager Rudi Assauer furiously rounded on Kirsten after the game asking him if he had "gone mad". Leverkusen coach Christoph Daum then also got involved as tempers were lost. The German federation has used TV evidence in the past in disciplinary cases, following an altercation between Frankfurt's Bruno Pezzey and burly Hamburg striker Horst Hrubesch back in 1979.

Vieri resumed training

MADRID (AFP) — Atletico Madrid striker Christian Vieri resumed training Monday after several weeks out with a leg muscle strain. "I don't know whether I'll play against Tenerife next Sunday. It depends on how the leg feels. After a month out it takes a while to get back to 100 percent," fitness, said Vieri, who has hit eight goals this term.

Bartolini to make Real debut

MADRID (AFP) — Brazilian striker Savio Bartolini is set to make his debut for Spanish champions Real Madrid on December 17 against Zaragoza following successful medical tests Monday. "Playing in Europe is a challenge for all Brazilians, but it's not goodbye for ever (to Brazil) as I'll go back one day," said Savio, 23, who has arrived from Flamengo.

Hernandez moves to Compostela

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (AFP) — Marseille defender Jean-Francois Hernandez is headed for a move to Spain's Santiago de Compostela, the club announced Monday. Compostela, struggling in 15th place in the league after Sunday's 4-1 home thrashing by Bilbao, want the 28-year-old to fill the breach left by injured central defenders Goran Sula and Francisco Villena. Hernandez lost his place in the Marseille line-up following the summer arrival of Laurent Blanc from Barcelona.

Anderlecht hire Haan — again

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Anderlecht, struggling to recapture the glory days, on Monday appointed Dutchman Arie Haan as coach to succeed Rene Vandereycken, sacked last week following a string of poor results. Anderlecht, 24 times Belgian champions, are currently languishing in midtable in the Belgian league and were knocked out of this season's UEFA Cup in the second round by holders Schalke of Germany. Haan, 48, was previously in charge of the club from 1985 to 1987. He was sacked as Feyenoord coach in October. Vandereycken, 44, lasted barely four months after taking over from Dutchman Johan Boskanp.

Stevens extends contract until 2001

COLOGNE (AFP) — The most successful coach in Schalke's turbulent history, Dutchman Huub Stevens, has agreed to extend his contract for another three years until the middle of 2001. "Schalke and I suit one another, I feel happy here," Stevens said on Monday. "I wasn't thinking about a move, although I do need to sort out my private situation," said 44-year-old Stevens, who left Dutch side Roda JC Kerkrade in October last year and immediately coached Schalke to last season's UEFA Cup, the club's greatest success. His family remains in the Netherlands, however, and he only sees them when his commitments in Gelsenkirchen allow him to get a few days away. "In a year's time my son will have finished his schooling. Maybe then my family will move to the Ruhr region or at least nearer to the border. But the one and a half hour drive home is not such a big problem," Stevens added. Schalke manager Rudi Assauer said: "We are happy that Stevens is staying another three years with us and we hope that we will keep on improving step by step." Stevens' agreement is verbal rather than in black and white, but he says it has been shaken on and that his word is his bond. On Tuesday, Schalke play their second leg UEFA Cup match against Portuguese club Sporting Braga. They drew the first leg 0-0 a fortnight ago.

Everton let Southall go

LIVERPOOL (AFP) — Everton agreed Tuesday to let veteran goalkeeper Neville Southall leave the English Premiership club. The 39-year-old, who has played over 750 times for the Merseyside giants, has been told by manager Howard Kendall he can leave immediately. Kendall said: "Neville has been in to see me and we have had a chat about the situation, and I have agreed to circulate all first division clubs that he is available on loan now." Southall had already been told he can leave Everton on a free transfer whenever Kendall found a replacement, and the new decision brings closer the day that he ends his 16-year career with the club. Kendall decided to give new Norwegian Thomas Myhre his debut at Leeds on Saturday, and the \$800,000 pounds (\$1.3 million) signing from Viking Stavanger was man of the match. Now, with former England Under-21 keeper Paul Gerrard fit and due for a reserve comeback, Kendall is prepared to let Southall go.

China in Women's soccer semis

GUANGZHOU (AFP) — China stormed into the semi-finals of the 11th Asian Women's Soccer Championships after destroying the Philippines 16-0 Tuesday. Five-time champions China broke the Philippine defence after five minutes before closing out the first half at 5-0. They gathered momentum in the second half, doubling their score within 10 minutes of the re-start and terrorising the hapless Philippine side for the rest of the game. The Philippines lost all their group matches and conceded 32 goals.

S. Korea cuts delegates to Olympics

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea, trounced by a deepening economic crisis, will limit the number of athletes competing in international sports events, including the Winter Olympic Games in Japan, the culture and sports ministry said Tuesday. The ministry said only athletes with chances of securing a medal or producing impressive performances would be sent to the Winter Games in Nagano and the Asian Games in Bangkok next year. The ministry gave no details such as the number of athletes to be dispatched to the Winter Games in February. The Korea Amateur Sports Association followed suit with cost-saving plans, including a cut in national athletes drafted for state-funded training. The association said the retrenchment program would help it shave at least 700 million won (\$483,000) off its annual budget, estimated at 5.7 billion won in 1997. South Korea is a major force in speed skating and hopes for several medals at Nagano.

'Le Tissier not for sale'

SOUTHAMPTON (AFP) — Southampton manager Dave Jones denied Tuesday that he is set to sell England star Matthew Le Tissier, who has been linked in media reports to a swap deal with Tottenham's David Ginola. Saints were reported to be ready to sell Le Tissier as he battles to rediscover the form which has seen him score 189 league and cup goals for the club in his 13-year career. Le Tissier, 29, who was substituted after 55 minutes of the 1-0 English Premiership defeat at Wimbledon on Sunday, is still not fully fit after breaking his elbow on a pre-season tour to Germany. But Saints insist they are not prepared to sell him. Director Andrew Coven said Le Tissier had a long-term contract at the Dell. "He is not for sale. We do not want to sell our best players and the intention is to help Dave Jones strengthen his squad, not weaken it," he said. Jones added: "Players thrive on confidence and at the moment Matt is a bit low, but it's no use knocking him. We will try to guide him and lift him to see him through this."

No action against Pouget

PARIS (AFP) — No action will be taken against former French international striker Cyril Pouget, who last month failed drug test for the anabolic steroid nandrolone. Pouget, who plays for Le Havre, returned a positive test for the drug, but will not be suspended because of doubts over urine samples that were tested. Jean-Jacques Bertrand, the lawyer representing Pouget, told a French Football Federation hearing that it was not proven that the samples tested had been provided by Pouget. Pouget said he was delighted by the "sensible" decision that no action be taken against him. The former Paris Saint Germain player was one of four French players to return recent positive tests. The others are Auxerre midfielder Antoine Sibierski, Toulouse player Dominique Arribage and Paris Saint Germain midfielder Vincent Guerin.

2nd Arab Handball Champions Cup
UAE's, Egypt's Ahli clubs qualify as power failure halts Group B decider

By Ruafan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Weather conditions caused a power failure in the final match of round one between Egypt's Al Olympi and Qatar's Rayyan Tuesday at the 2nd Arab Handball Champions Cup currently under way in Amman with ten teams taking part. Following a late night meeting, the Jordan Handball Federation JHF announced that the match would resume Wednesday's afternoon.

The match was halted with a 12-7 lead for Al Olympi five minutes into the second half. The result of the match will determine Group B's final standings and the second qualifying team from the group after Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli clinched the first qualifying berth to the second round.

The Saudi team now enjoy a temporary lead after a 35-34 win over Kuwait's Al Qadissieh but they have to wait for Wednesday's match to decide the final standings of the group.

In Group A, Egypt's Al Ahli took the lead with 8 points followed by United Arab Emirates' Al Ahli with 6 points as both teams moved to the semifinals.

UAE's Al Ahli overcame Jordan's Al Salt 25-20 (12-12) ending Al Salt's dream of qualifying to the second round.

Al Salt had to settle for playing for fifth and sixth places against Group B's still undecided third place team.

Group B's fourth placed Kuwait's Al Qadissieh will play Group A's fourth placed Qatar's Qatar Club for seventh and eighth places.

The Qatari team had beaten Lebanon's Al Sadaqah 27-26 (13-12) in Monday's late match.

Meanwhile, Jordan's Al Arabi came in last place in Group B with only one point from a 35-35 tie with Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli and will now play Group A's last, Lebanon's Al Sadaqah, for ninth and tenth places.

• UAE's Al Ahli 25 Jordan Al Salt

Second round schedule of matches

Semifinals			
Egypt's Al Ahli vs. Group B runner-up	Dec. 11	3 p.m.	
Group B leader vs. UAE's Al Ahli	Dec. 11	5 p.m.	
9-10th places			
Lebanon's Al Sadaqah vs. Jordan's Al Arabi	Dec. 12	3 p.m.	
7-8th places			
Qatar's Qatar vs. Kuwait's Al Qadissieh	Dec. 12	5 p.m.	
5-6th places			
Jordan's Al Salt vs. Group B third	Dec. 12	7 p.m.	
3rd and 4th places (semifinal losers)			
Final match (semifinal winners)	Dec. 13	3 p.m.	
	Dec. 13	5 p.m.	

Group A

	P	W	T	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
Egypt's Al Ahli	4	4	-	-	140	91	8
UAE's Al Ahli	4	3	-	1	116	100	6
Jordan's Al Salt	4	1	-	3	91	101	2
Qatar's Qatar	4	1	-	3	86	113	2
Leb.'s Al Sadaqah	4	1	-	3	105	133	2

Group B

	P	W	T	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
S. Arabia's Al Ahli	4	2	2	-	125	121	6
Qatar's Al Rayyan	3	2	1	-	87	74	5
Egypt's Al Olympi	3	2	-	1	104	83	4
Kuwait's Qadissieh	4	1	-	3	111	126	2
Jordan's Al Arabi	4	-	1	3	124	147	1

20: Both teams knew a win is what they needed to qualify for the second round.

Al Salt fought bravely during the first half giving their best depending on Mohammad Al Hindawi and Jihad Qaishat.

On the other hand, Al Ahli faced tough resistance from Al Salt's defence and tried to move faster at least to secure the first half.

Al Salt stood tall against their opponent's deadly attacks and tied the match 12-12 at half-time.

With the first half's result, Al Salt

kept hoping for a win and pressured Al Ahli's defence while neglecting their own. Al Ahli were able to keep the lead and qualified for the second round.

Held under the patronage of HRH Princess Sumayya, the 2nd Arab Handball Champions Cup kicked off Dec. 3 and concludes Dec. 13.

The Jordan Handball Federation has allocated cash rewards for Jordan's two teams in the tourney — Al Salt and Al Arabi: JD 2,000 if they finish third, JD1,000 for fourth place and JD500 for fifth place.

Charlton backs United for Euro glory

MANCHESTER (AFP) — Manchester United legend Bobby Charlton is confident the English champions can beat Juventus for a second time when the two giants of European football clash in Turin on Wednesday.

Charlton, who skipped United to their last European Cup success in 1968, says there is no reason why Alex Ferguson's exciting,

young side cannot repeat October's 3-2 success against the Italian champions at Old Trafford.

"We've beaten Juventus before so there's no reason why we can't beat them again," Charlton said.

United have already qualified for the knock-out stage of the Champions' League, and Charlton admits that the club find themselves in a "strange situation."

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962
K542
AK32
J8
EAST
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73
Q634
Q10642
SOUTH
QJ5
AQJ109
87
AK7
The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1st Pass 2nd Pass
2nd Pass 3rd Pass
4th Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead: King of ♠.
It might be only an average mark at school, but it is a key letter in declarer's play. It stands for count and control. Two key elements that declarer needs to fulfill any contract.
North's raise to two hearts is eminently correct. Should North elect to bid one spade instead, there would be all sorts of problems no matter what rebid South made except a spade raise. South was a victim of a jump to game, so be!

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Israel will not make speedy decision on W. Bank pullout

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel will decide on the scope of a limited West Bank troop pullback only after it has sketched a map of final borders with the Palestinians, the cabinet secretary said Tuesday, despite U.S. calls for quick action.

A cabinet debate on final borders with the Palestinians is scheduled for Sunday, but agreement among the deeply divided ministers is improbable after only one session.

As a result, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is likely to go empty-handed into a meeting next week with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who is pressing for a quick and detailed Israeli offer on a limited troop pullback.

Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh said Tuesday that Israel would not be press-

sured into making a quick decision on the next redeployment.

"One cannot set a deadline for such important decisions," Mr. Naveh told Israel Radio. "We will first decide on our interests for the final status, and only then will we be able to decide on the size of redeployment."

In a meeting last week, Ms. Albright told Mr. Netanyahu she expected Israel to hand over at least 12 per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian control in the next stage of withdrawal, the Haaretz and Maariv newspapers said Tuesday.

The Israelis have been floating a proposal of a pullback of between 6 per cent and 8 per cent, while the Palestinians expect closer to 30 per cent.

Mr. Netanyahu was eva-

sive when asked by his cabinet ministers Monday whether Ms. Albright had set a minimum. "I clearly asked Bibi whether the secretary of state dictated a certain percentage, whether he had to come to the next meeting with certain percentages," Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani told Israel Radio, referring to Mr. Netanyahu by his widely used nickname.

"I did not understand his answer," Mr. Kahalani said. Mr. Kahalani said he didn't believe there was unlimited time. "I have no doubt that the American pressure is growing," he said.

As part of a U.S.-brokered agreement, Israel had agreed to pull back troops in the West Bank in three stages by mid-1998. The Palestinians rejected the first pullback offer of 2 per cent in March as insuffi-

cient. Mr. Netanyahu has said recently he was ready to withdraw troops from an as yet unspecified area in a second stage, on condition that the Palestinians do more to fight Islamists.

Israel has said it would skip stage three and go straight into talks on a permanent peace agreement, which would address final borders, Jerusalem and the future of Jewish settlements.

However, the United States is siding with the Palestinians in their demand that Israel must carry out the third withdrawal.

Mr. Naveh denied reports that Ms. Albright was getting increasingly impatient with Mr. Netanyahu. "The talks between the prime minister and the secretary of state were good, and the Americans saw how serious we are about continuing the process," he said.

Israel, Turkey under potential missile threat — Israeli minister

ANKARA (AFP) — Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai Tuesday implied that Israel and Turkey faced potential threats from what he said were the missile and chemical weapons capabilities of Iran, Syria and Iraq.

"The countries producing ballistic missiles, using chemical weapons and supporting terrorism constitute an element of threat in the region," Mr. Mordechai told reporters during a two-day official visit.

"These states may in the future direct their threats against Israel and Turkey," he said.

Mr. Mordechai was referring to Iran, Syria and Iraq which, according to the United States and Israel, support terrorism and are involved in efforts to build ballistic missiles and chemical weapons.

"In this connection, it is only natural that these two strong countries [Israel and Turkey] help and support each other," Mr. Mordechai said, accord-

ing to the Anatolia news agency.

After decades of dormant relations, Turkey and Israel last year boosted their ties to a strategic level despite strong protests from several Arab states and Iran.

A resolution was adopted by ministers representing 55 members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Tehran Sunday condemning Muslim states with military ties with Israel.

The resolution did not mention Turkey by name, but Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq Al Shara said the text clearly targeted Ankara.

However, Turkish Defence Minister Ismet Sezgin dismissed the resolution at a meeting with Mr. Mordechai Monday, saying: "That text is not binding for us."

Israel has no relations with Iran and Iraq, and its preliminary peace talks with Syria have failed as ties between Israel and the Palestinians deteriorated.

Turkey complains that Syria and Iran support separatist Turkish Kurds operating in the country's troubled south-east.

During Mordechai's visit, the first by an Israeli defence minister to Turkey, a predominantly Muslim but secular state, the two countries pledged to deepen their military ties despite Arab concerns.

"Our relationship is a strategic one.... We are happy with the pace of development in our relations and we will do everything we can to boost those ties in political, military and industrial fields," Mr. Mordechai said.

He and Sezgin also discussed controversial joint naval exercises involving Israel, Turkey and the United States which were twice postponed and are now due to be held in January. Iran and the Arab states have denounced the planned manoeuvres.

Under military cooperation deals signed last year, Israel

trains Turkish pilots in return for the right to conduct training exercises in Turkish air space.

Israel also signed a \$630 million contract to modernise Turkey's F-4 fighters and agreed on joint production of Israel's Popeye ground-to-air missile for the Turkish armed forces.

Israel hopes to sell its Merkava III tank, Arrow ground-to-air missiles, Python air-to-air missiles and Phalcon early warning planes.

His visit is the latest in a series of official visits between the two countries, with Chief of the Turkish General Staff Karadayi and former defence minister Turhan Tayan meeting their counterparts in Tel Aviv and Lieutenant General Amnon Shahak visiting Ankara earlier this year.

Mr. Mordechai is due to return home on Wednesday.

Bombing suspect says Saudis paid \$150,000 to kill Yemeni minister

ADEN (AFP) — The Saudi authorities paid \$150,000 to assassinate the Yemeni foreign minister, the main defendant in a trial into a series of bombings here in July said Tuesday.

Nabil Nanakli Kasebati said the Saudis gave him the money "for use in preparing the plans" for the attack on Abdul Karim Al Iryani and told him they would pay him "a further sum for carrying out the operation."

Kasebati, a Syrian who holds a Spanish passport, is being tried along with 26 Yemenis for alleged involvement in the bombings, which the Yemeni authorities blame on opposition groups who led

an unsuccessful 1994 secession bid in the formerly independent south.

Yemen accused its Gulf neighbours of siding with the rebels in the 1994 civil war and has criticised them for harbouring fugitive leaders of the failed breakaway.

Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz has denied that his government recruited agents to carry out attacks in Yemen.

Last Thursday Kasebati told the court he had been recruited by the Saudi intelligence services and "been trained on two separate occasions in [the western Saudi city of] Jeddah by Saudis and a Palestinian."

Kasebati said the Saudis had then sent him off to Yemen in 1996 as an active Saudi intelligence agent.

He said he was later ordered to prepare a car-bomb attack on the Yemeni foreign minister. He said it was only because of his arrest in August that he had been unable to carry it out. The Yemeni authorities say they found weapons in three different flats rented by Kasebati in Sanaa.

The judge set the next hearing in the trial, which opened Nov. 19, for Saturday.

Another trial of around 30 people suspected of bombings in Yemen opened in Sanaa on Nov. 18.

Israelis divided on withdrawal from Golan Heights

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israelis are split on whether their country should withdraw from the Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria, according to an opinion poll made public on Israeli television on Monday.

Asked if they were in favour of a total withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for peace, provided there were arrangements for Israel's security, 49 per cent said no and 32 per cent said yes.

Another 16 per cent said they were in favour of a partial withdrawal from the Golan, which Israel occupied in 1967, while three per cent had no opinion, according to the survey of 500 people.

Israel suspended peace talks with Syria in February 1996 following a spate of suicide bombings by Islamists and ahead of national elections which saw rightwinger Benjamin Netanyahu take power.

Efforts to revive the negotiations have faltered over Syria's insistence that Mr. Netanyahu take up a reported agreement in principle by the former Labour government to return the Golan in exchange for peace.

Relations are in the spotlight once again after revelations that an Israeli intelligence agent nearly sparked a war with Syria by falsifying reports to his superiors about President Assad's true intentions.



AHEAD OF SPICE GIRLS' NEW SINGLE: The Teletubbies, the four wide-eyed, bubble-bodied creatures from a toddlers' television show, have soared to the top of British record sales charts with their song 'Eh-Oh!' British bookmakers are now making the colourful foursome the odds-on favourite for the much sought-after Christmas Number One slot, ahead of the Spice Girls' new single 'Too much.' Every morning over two million fans of all ages tune into the babytalk adventures of Tinky Winky, Dipsy, Laa Laa and Po, who hobble around spouting nonsensical sounds, dressed in colourful jumpsuits and nappies, with TV sets embedded in their tummies. The Teletubbies have achieved cult status in South Africa, United States and Denmark as well as several European countries (AFP photo)

U.N. chief calls for respect of Oslo peace agreements

TEHRAN (AFP) — U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed grave concern for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process here Tuesday, and called on both sides to respect the Oslo interim peace accords.

"The international community cannot but view with deep dismay the continuing stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations," Mr. Annan told the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit.

"In order to push the peace process forward it is essential that the terms of the Oslo accords are respected," Mr. Annan said.

"Effective measures also need to be adopted in order to curb the violence that has arisen over the past several months. We urge both sides to fulfil their commitments," he said.

Israel has balked at handing over a large parcel of West Bank land to the Palestinians, as foreseen in the interim accords, on the grounds that President Yasser Arafat is not doing enough to clamp down on Islamist violence.

President Arafat insists that under the interim peace agreements Israel should withdraw from an additional 70 per cent of the West Bank, while Israeli media reports Tuesday

said Mr. Netanyahu was offering just 10 per cent.

In his speech to the OIC delegates, who include more than 30 Muslim heads of state and prime ministers, Mr. Annan also strongly condemned the warring parties in Afghanistan.

Mr. Annan criticised the factions for failing to rise above "narrow factional interests," and unspecified foreign countries for fuelling the conflict with supplies of arms and making diplomatic efforts "almost irrelevant."

"Too many groups in Afghanistan — war lords, terrorists, drug dealers and others — appear to have too much to gain from war and too much to lose from peace," said the U.N. chief.

Since the Soviet army pulled out of Afghanistan in 1989, the country has been wracked by civil war.

The Sunni Islamist Taliban militia, backed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, control two-thirds of the country where they have implemented a fundamentalist agenda that bans women from education and employment.

"Any genuine peace process must begin with a complete ceasefire and an effective arms embargo," said Mr. Annan.

Shiite Muslim Iran is

strongly opposed to the Taliban, supporting the northern opposition forces, and recognising deposed leader Burhanuddin Rabbani as Afghanistan's legitimate ruler although the country's seat at the OIC has been left empty.

The OIC leaders are set to pass a resolution during the three-day summit here calling for an end to violence in Afghanistan, but the text does not mention an arms embargo.

Mr. Annan hailed the signing of a Tajikistan peace accord in Moscow and the progress in Somali peace talks in Cairo.

He also called on the international community to track down war criminals responsible for "genocidal policies" during the conflicts in the Balkans and to back the extension of the international military presence in Bosnia.

Mr. Annan concluded by paying tribute to the "universal force" of Islam and its contribution to world civilisation.

He added: "This fact makes it all the more distressing to witness the increasing resort to violence and terror by extremist groups in the name of Islam."

Both Egypt, and in particular Algeria, have been the scenes of massacres of civilians in recent months by armed Islamists.

U.S. leader of Nation of Islam arrives in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (RI) — U.S. black leader Louis Farrakhan arrived in Iraq on Tuesday at the start of a visit which may include a meeting with President Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Farrakhan arrived in Baghdad from Jordan on board a coach with an entourage of around 50 people. He came by road because of the U.N. sanctions which prevent international flights.

The Nation of Islam leader was silent in the face of reporters' questions. Surrounded by hefty bodyguards, he just uttered the

word "peace" when asked about the purpose of his visit.

Mr. Farrakhan visited Baghdad last year. He met President Hussein and attacked the U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait as a "wicked policy which must be stopped immediately."

He said then he would work "nights and days marshalling the moral force that I believe is in all the American people to bring every pressure... on our government... that the mass murder of the Iraqi people must cease."

Mr. Farrakhan's trip follows a number of high-profile visits to Iraq by vocal critics of Washington's policy towards Iraq, including Russian ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and U.S. anti-sanctions group Voices in the Wilderness.

It also comes just weeks after Iraq's latest standoff with Washington following its brief expulsion of American weapons inspectors. Iraq said it let the inspectors back in after winning a Russian pledge to work harder to lift the sanctions.



Bond back in business at 'Tomorrow Never Dies' premiere

LONDON (AFP) — James Bond, Special Agent 007 Licensed to Kill, heads off a new threat to the world order Tuesday with the premiere of his latest adventure, "Tomorrow Never Dies," to be attended by droves of London's glitterati. Save as ever, Ian Fleming's indefatigable spy is called on to avert a third world war which a demonic press baron — all resemblance with Rupert Murdoch being entirely coincidental — aims to set off in order to enjoy exclusive reporting rights. Incarnated for a second time by the dashing Pierce Brosnan, Bond struts his stuff from Afghanistan to Mexico, defying Scud missiles, assault helicopters, falls from 30,000 feet — all in a day's work — and can be counted on to get his girl.

Herbal remedies are hot with Hollywood stars fighting the flu

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — What do Hollywood stars take when they are feeling ill? Herbs and natural remedies are hot — particularly with the annual flu season causing delays in movie and television production. Dustin Hoffman, who appeared most recently in "Mad City," depends on garlic. "It's a natural antibiotic, good for the digestion and blood. I used to eat a clove a day when I wasn't working," says Hoffman, who so overpowered fellow cast members in the pirate movie "Hook" that they began nibbling garlic in defence.

Ralph Fiennes' new movie role a natural Oscar

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — When Ralph Fiennes read the script for the movie "Oscar and Lucinda" and discovered its quirky male lead, he declared, "I am Oscar." "There is something in Oscar I feel an empathy for," Fiennes said. "It is something to do with faith and guilt and conscience, with the struggle between spiritual aspiration and the recognition of the pleasure of being alive. There are things that are pleasurable that society says are not allowed. But at what point does pleasure in life become indulgence, a negative thing, an anti-spiritual force?" said Fiennes.

DR Congo's government steps in to heal pop group rift

KINSHASA (AFP) — Music groups split up as frequently as new ones are formed, but few find themselves the subject of intense government pressure to bury their differences and stick together for the sake of the nation. "Wenge Musica BCBG 454" — one of the Democratic Republic of Congo's most popular groups — were called in for an interview with Minister of Information and Culture Raphael Ghenda following a highly publicised spat between the band's two main stars. Ghenda called on the group to reconcile and avoid any permanent split.

Hashimoto grumbles to Gates about pleasure lost by computers

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto grumbled to visiting Microsoft chairman Bill Gates on Tuesday that the advancement of computer technology had diminished his pleasure in reading science fiction novels. "I told him: 'You and people following you have deprived me of some pleasure in my life. You have turned science fictions into classics,'" the premier was quoted as telling reporters after meeting the U.S. billionaire. "Then he said to me: 'I'm not working to diminish your dream'," Hashimoto was quoted by Jiji Press as saying.

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